

GoodFood

Mediterranean cooking

- Fresh pasta ideas
- Light bites
- Party platters

Lamb, lemon & dill souvlaki p44

Make-ahead desserts to impress

Eat better

- Must-have superfoods
- Healthy meals for two

Very Moorish!

A gourmet adventure in magical Marrakech

NOW IN DOHA!



FREE

Mini mag inside!

Kitchens special





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Welcome!



Change is definitely in the air this month. And I'm not just referring to the weather! For one, we are going international – this month marks *BBC Good Food ME's* debut in Doha, and we couldn't be more excited about becoming a part of the dynamic city's evolving food scene. Want to know what I'm talking about? Read *Doha diaries* on p20.

Change is a good thing – and this message was reinforced strongly with us

when Assistant editor Nicola interviewed Gundeep Singh, who founded sustainable solutions store, The Change Initiative, and a man clearly committed to change. He shares some interesting insights and advice on why and how to go green in the kitchen, in *Give your kitchen an eco makeover* (p73), along with another eco warrior in Dubai, Tolga Soytekin, the man behind home-grown cleaning product range, Eco Green. The main lesson I learnt from them is that a few simple lifestyle changes can make a big difference – it's just a matter of being mindful of how every single action and choice, can have an impact on the environment, and your life.

If you're in the mood to bring about change in the kitchen, then you don't have to look any further than *Instant style updates for your kitchen* on p65, a compilation of smart, savvy ideas that can help turn your kitchen from drab to fab. Along with pro tips from foodie personalities on kitchen makeovers, (p68 and p78), as you can see, we've got it covered in our Kitchens special feature this month.

Our other focus in this issue is Mediterranean cooking – whether you're looking for light, healthy ideas for family suppers, or want to impress guests with minimum fuss, a little Med-influence goes a long way when it comes to the taste factor. I am definitely trying out BBC Master Chef judge John Torode's *Perfect Pastas* (p38), particularly the homemade pesto pasta!

The last time I felt this inspired to try so many different Mediterranean flavours, was last May. This issue marks one year since I joined the *BBC Good Food ME* team – I can't believe how quickly this year has gone by. You know what they say, time flies when you're having fun!

Here's to a fun month,

Sudeshna

Editor's picks

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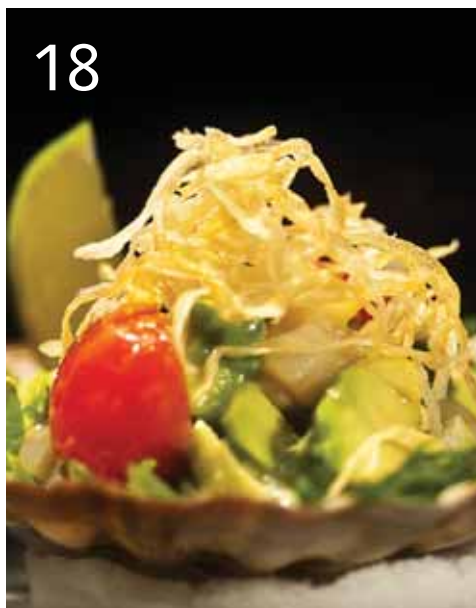
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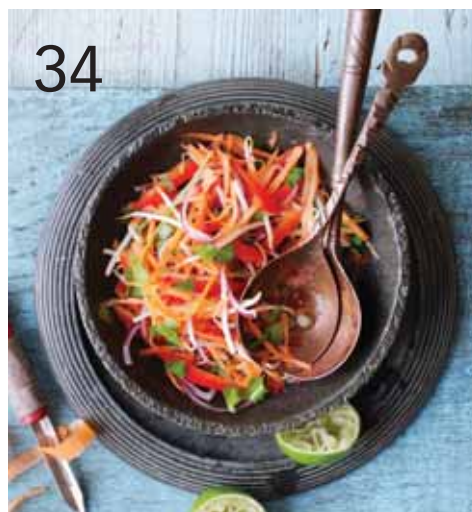
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On the cover
Lamb, lemon & dill souvlaki

44

Our recipe descriptions

- V** Suitable for vegetarians
 - F** You can freeze it
 - N** Not suitable for freezing
 - Easy** Simple recipes even beginners can make
 - A little effort** These require a bit more skill and confidence – such as making pastry
 - More of a challenge** Recipes aimed at experienced cooks
 - Low fat** 12g or less per portion
 - Low cal** 500 calories or less per main.
 - Superhealthy** Low in saturated fat, 5g or less per portion; low in salt, 1.5g or less; and at least one of the following: provides one-third or more of your daily requirement of fibre, iron, calcium, folic acid and/or vitamin C, or counts at least one portion of your recommended 5-a-day fruit and veg.
 - Good for you** Low in saturated fat, low in salt.
 - Heart healthy** Low in saturated fat, with 5g or less, and low in salt, with 1.5g or less, and high in omega-3 fatty acids
 - 1 of 5-a-day** The number of portions of fruit and/or veg contained in a serving
 - Vit C** **Iron** **Omega-3** **Calcium** **Folate** **Fibre**
- Indicating recipes that are good sources of useful nutrients

Some recipes contain pork & alcohol. These are clearly marked and are for non-Muslims only. Look for these symbols:

- P** contains pork
- A** contains alcohol

Your say

We love to hear from you!

BEGIN WITH BREAKFAST

The toaster review (*On test: Toasters*, March 2013) and Facebook poll answers (*Your Say*, March 2013) in the April issue of *BBC Good Food ME* inspired me to share my thoughts this month. My husband and I are advocates of a boiled egg each morning, as it give us a speedy and nutritious start to the day, and leaves us feeling full until lunchtime. After taking a look at the Facebook poll answers 'We asked you', I was surprised to learn that only 13 per cent of the people who responded, ate eggs. I encourage people to switch to eggs as a healthy and satisfying start to their day, in particular the 20 per cent who choose to eat nothing for breakfast!

Rebecca Wadsworth



MUM ON THE GO

Being a working mother, I found it easy to relate to TV show host and celebrity chef Rachel Allen (*Celeb chef by day, mum by night*, March 2013). I love how she talks about going home and cooking meals for the family, and planning ahead. I gave her Irish coffee cups a go, with non-alcoholic versions for my kids, and it was demolished in minutes! I am definitely going to buy one of her books so that I can make easy, healthy meals for my family.

Arlene Pinto



TALK TO US!

Email us on feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com with your thoughts, views and comments.

You can also connect with us on social media! Find us on:



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Or, you could write to us at:

The Editor
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Dubai Media City, Building 4, Office G08
PO Box 13700, Dubai, UAE.



The writer of the Star Letter wins a **Dhs1,000 voucher from @home**, South Africa's leading homeware store. @home offers a glamorous and fashionable range of products for the entire home, including the bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, dining, and living room, as well as general home décor items, appliances and office accessories. Their contemporary, fresh, and innovative products are both practical and aesthetically designed. @home stores are located in Dubai at Mercato Mall, Ibn Battuta Mall, Dubai Marina Mall, The Dubai Mall and Mall of the Emirates; in Abu Dhabi at Al Wahda mall; and at Al Hamra Mall in Ras Al Khaimah.



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Star Letter

FOOD FOR THE FAMILY

I've always loved cooking, and make it a point to cook a hot meal for my family every single day, in spite of a busy schedule. I find the easy, everyday recipes you always include in the magazine absolutely invaluable – as any mum will agree, you always need new ideas for suppers that you know are good-for-you. To my joy, I find my younger son developing an interest in food too, so I really enjoyed trying out the *Cooking with kids* recipes

from your last issue. I also appreciated the chicken recipes (*Chicken confidential*, April 2013), as I am trying to cut down on red meat intake, but always struggle to get creative with chicken – it's my least favourite protein! Thank you *BBC Good Food ME*, and keep up the good work!

Sushmita Larkins



A WINNING ISSUE

I wanted to write in and say how much I enjoyed the March issue of the magazine, that covered the awards. I had an amazing night, and it was a pleasure to see some of the highlights in the issue. I even made one of the winning recipes, the Quail and Sherri surf and turf (albeit with a few shortcuts!), which turned out absolutely delicious.

Penelope Stote

TRAVEL INSPIRATION

Whenever I think of spring breaks, I recall my

days in university when the holidays were spent either travelling, or lazing around with friends. Now that I have a busy schedule, I eagerly wait for the rare long weekends, so that I can book in a relaxing break. I enjoyed reading the different kinds of destinations I can visit (*Spring breaks*, March 2013), and will definitely be booking a family break with my husband and kids. In fact, I'm also thinking of a wellness break – with the girls – very soon. Thank you *BBC Good Food ME*, for inspiring me to 'take a break'!

Sharon Masi

We asked you...

Facebook poll

What is your go-to weekday lunch?

67% Packed sandwich
11% Takeout of the day
11% Rice dishes
11% Salad





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Foodie file

What's hot and happening in the culinary world, here and around the globe.



Café Habana

DINE IN THE CITY

- ★ The latest American concept to hit town, Café Habana at Souk al Bahar offers a cosy environment to enjoy Pan-Latin American food with a Cuban twist – think fish tacos, and lamb chops with beans and rice – and yum cocktails. A relaxed vibe, complete with juggling bartenders, ensure a lively evening. Call 04-4222620.
- ★ Food meets style at the all-new Comptoir102 café, located at the lifestyle boutique on Jumeirah Beach Road. Serving a selection of organic, gluten-and fat-free dishes, the café menu includes zucchini carpaccio, bulghur risotto with roasted eggplant, and a decadent dairy, milk, sugar, and egg-free chocolate mousse – which is a must-have. Call 04-3854555.
- ★ The latest casual dining spot to open up at the Marina Walk is Pei Wei Asian Diner, a sister restaurant of the popular P.F Chang's. The menu features Asian-inspired dishes such as Japanese teriyaki, Pad Thai, spicy Korean, and small plates like chicken egg rolls and Thai wonton soup. Visit peiwei.com.
- ★ This month, you'll want to see and be seen at the stylish Soho bar and grill in Century Village, which boasts New York-inspired interiors and an alfresco dining area. Have a cocktail at the bar, or try out the 1.2kg Tomahawk steak or rack of lamb for dinner. Call 04-2868520.



Beauty in a bottle!

You no longer need to dip into the fountain of youth to get beautiful glowing skin, as the world's first natural beauty drink, Ocoo, is here. With just 48 calories per bottle, the vitamin and antioxidant-packed drink consists of a blend of red and blue berries, and has been scientifically proven to promote healthy hair, skin and cell renewal, and have anti-ageing benefits, which, they claim, can be noticed in just six to eight weeks! Dhs49, at Galeries Lafayette and ocoobeauty.com.



This just in:

The nifty Masterchef Gourmet by Moulinex, is the ultimate multipurpose kitchen gadget, allowing you to knead dough, shred, mince meat, blend, mix, and extract juice, with its six-speed settings and 900W motor. Dhs1,299, at all leading electronic stores.

Home



What's trending



#Organic

Check out Six Senses @Ziggy Bay on Twitter for a snapshot of their fresh #organic fig harvest, and @Organillicious to find out which #organic apples are safe to eat, and free from antibiotics.

EAT FIT!

If you're an athlete or love playing sport to keep fit, Right Bite's new customised program 'FuelUp' is for you. The FuelUp package is designed to help you get lean or gain muscle, with breakfast, beverages, snacks, pre-and post-exercise snacks and dinner included in the daily offerings. All the meals are packed with essential nutrients, to help you reach your fitness goals. From Dhs3,530, call 04-3425208.

Cookery is not chemistry. It is an art. It requires instinct and taste rather than exact measurements.

– Marcel Boulestin, French chef and restaurateur.



OCEAN'S BOUNTY

Hyatt Hotels have recently introduced their global philosophy 'Food. Thoughtfully sourced. Carefully served', in their UAE hotels, as part of which, they have tied up with the Choose Wisely sustainable fish campaign. All five properties in the UAE will now serve only sustainable fish on their restaurant menus.

SAVE THE DATES

• French department store, Galeries Lafayette will be hosting their first Food festival at Lafayette Gourmet from May 8-12. Get ready to watch chefs cook up a storm at live cooking stations, and don't forget to bring the kids along, as there will be tons of activities for them too! Cal 04-3399933.

• Gather up foodies! The Jumeirah Restaurant Week is back again from May 23 to June 1, so make a note of the restaurants you wish to visit, and enjoy three-course menus at affordable prices – Dhs120 per person at casual dining restaurants, and Dhs180 per person at fine dining outlets. Visit Jumeirah.com/restaurantweek for a complete list of participating restaurants.



ANOTHER STAR

World-renowned Michelin-starred chef Alain Ducasse recently received the Lifetime achievement award, sponsored by Diners Club International, for his excellence in the culinary industry for over 30 years. Ducasse is the first chef to have three Michelin stars in different cities, and his restaurant, Le Louis XV, at the Hotel de Paris in Monaco has been featured 14 times on the World's 50 best restaurants list.





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Tuscan food is known for its simplicity, allowing the freshest ingredients and strong flavours to be tasted as nature intended. Our PAX chefs have created their own recipes for a regional favourite for you to sate your appetite.

Come and join our chefs as they masterfully create a number of Tuscan favourites throughout May and June and take away your copy of the recipes to try it in your kitchen.



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Aisle file

Gorgeous gourmet buys, kitchen gear, foodie accessories, home décor and more.



This Samarkand plate is too pretty to eat on every day, so we're going to make sure it only sees the light of day at lunch parties! Dhs240 each, at **VILLEROY AND BOCH**.



These Montezuma Ecuador dark chocolate bars in lemon meringue pudding and Eton mess flavours, combine our two favourite sweet treats – chocolate and these quintessentially English desserts. Dhs20, at **CANDELITE**.

Home fragrances just got a lot more stylish with the launch of Missoni Homes' first candle range, Illuminati perfumes. Featuring the signature Missoni print, the candles are available in a variety of fragrances such as the Maremma (an earthy floral fragrance); Monterosa (with woody aromatic notes) and Mediterraneo (a fresh,



light scent) to name a few. Dhs475 at **MISSONI HOME, HARVEY NICHOLS**.

With its pastel colours and floral print, this gorgeous Pink rose oval tray will give any coffee table a shabby chic touch. And at just Dhs29, at **2XL FURNITURE**, it's a steal!



We can never have enough afternoon tea sessions with the girls! This floral Cup and Saucer set will definitely be a conversation starter at our next tea party – and it's compact and convenient too! Dhs99, at **HOMES R US**.

There's nothing like a fresh, healthy salad for lunch, when it's hot outside, and this handy Kitchen expert salad chef, which cuts, chops, spins leaves and dices vegetables and fruits, is definitely going to be our favourite gadget this season. Dhs196, at **CITRUSSTV.COM**.



Forget just wearing it as jewellery, now you can drink gold too – with the luxurious new Gold Emotion, a sparkling apple juice with 24 carat food grade gold flakes inside. A sure-fire way to impress guests! Dhs198, at **FORREY AND GALLAND**.

Add a touch of art to the kitchen with this funky Fridge sticker. Dhs165, at **WAMLI.COM**.



Do your onions, potatoes and vegetables always spoil too quickly? Keep them fresh for longer with these Vegetable preserving bags, which are made of breathable poly-cotton materials to allow air circulation and reduce moisture, as well as restrict light. Dhs24 each, at **LAKELAND**.





Here to help

Our expert chef Andy Campbell offers practical advice to tackle all your cooking dilemmas.



Q Is there an ingredient which can be added to fried chicken to make it juicy and flaky?

A. Having lived in New Orleans, I was given this method by a very good Creole cook. To make chicken juicy, my suggestion would be to dip it in buttermilk before frying. In a bag, season flour with smoked paprika, a pinch of cayenne pepper, salt, pepper and mixed herbs. Dip the chicken in the flour and place on a tray lined with wax paper. Allow the chicken to sit until the consistency of the flour on it looks like paste. Brown in very hot oil, in a deep fat fryer. Reduce the heat and cook through for about 30 minutes. Remove from the pan and reheat the oil till very hot, then return the chicken for a couple of minutes again, to make it crispy. Drain on kitchen paper and serve immediately. For a healthier option you can remove the chicken skins, before dipping it into buttermilk.

Q What alternative ingredients can I use to get the curry flavor, without the heat?

A. You can use more herbs but it's really about the amount of fiery spice used in the blend. My son and I like mild flavours and kormas made with coriander, turmeric and cumin, softened onions garlic and ginger. Try blending coriander, cumin, turmeric and fenugreek powders, and substitute chilli for paprika to make a Madras-style curry. Fresh curry leaves also give the aroma and taste associated with curry.

Q How do you cut cottage cheese without it crumbling?

A. I love using cottage cheese for dishes such as mutter paneer (peas and paneer curry). When I buy cottage cheese as a block, I take it out of the fridge for a couple of hours before cutting into cubes. Other methods include soaking the cheese in warm water or gently warming in an oven until softened. A cheese wire may be of help when cubing the cheese.



Q Can I use brown rice in a biryani. Please tell me how?

A. Yes you can – all you need to do is follow the same method as white rice biryani, but only cook the rice a little longer. It will be much healthier too! Why not try one of my favourite recipes for brown rice chicken biryani? First, fry the almonds and crispy onions for the garnish. Brown the chicken or meat in the same oil until golden brown, strain and keep warm. Fry the remaining onions till golden, add garlic, ginger and chilli, and spice mix. Return the chicken to the pan and add stock, to simmer, before covering with a lid for 25 minutes. Remove the lid and let the liquid reduce for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, add the rice to a pot of salted stock with a cinnamon stick, a couple of bay leaves and 3 bruised cardamom pods. Simmer for about 40 minutes – white rice usually takes 20 minutes – to

let the rice absorb the liquid. Remove the spices, add the chicken and rice together with a little milk infused with saffron, and some chopped herbs. Put into a casserole dish, cover with foil and bake for 45 minutes at 180C. Garnish with the crispy onions and almonds.

Q I cannot differentiate between soft and hard peaks in egg whites and whipping cream. Please explain the difference, and give me a tip on how to test the peaks?

A. A great way of explaining peaks is through the preparation of a meringue. Add two egg whites in a mixing bowl with a pinch of salt and half a teaspoon of cream of tartar – this helps to stabilise the meringue. Start by mixing on a low speed. The whites will turn opaque. Add two tablespoons of sugar in small amounts, and you will notice the foam will now start to take shape. Turn the mixer to a medium speed to reach a soft peak stage – you will know this when you hold it on a spoon, the peaks will appear soft and easily fall over. As you gradually add more sugar, they become more aerated and glossy. The meringue will finally get a sharp pointed stiff peak, when it holds its shape on the spoon and is glossy in appearance with no graininess.



Andy's ingredient of the month

Local corn has various anti-carcinogenic properties, and is a great source of nutrients, vitamin B, and minerals. Eat it mixed with local clams in chowder, and roasted with avocados in a salad. Available at all leading supermarkets.

Ask us & win! Got a cooking question you need answered? Send your culinary query to feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com and be in with a chance to win a dinner voucher for two, worth Dhs500, for the Thursday S&S night offer at The Address Dubai Marina, where you can feast on sushi, salads, steak and sides. To find out more about Chef Andy, visit chefandycampbell.com.

*Winner will be chosen on a random basis.



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On test: Rice Cookers

Essential home gadgets reviewed.

Cuisinart rice and cereal cooker

This cute, compact gadget appears deceptively small but packs in a punch when it comes to functionality. Easy to use and ideal for modern kitchens – with specific measurement instructions for cereals like bulghur and quinoa – it comes with practical accessories such as a measuring cup, spatula, steamer pot and also features a retractable cord, for convenient storage.



What we liked: Even though cooking rice might seem easy enough without an appliance dedicated to it, once you use one, there's no looking back! Being a first time user of a rice cooker wasn't an issue at all, as the process of using this Paul Bocuse-endorsed gadget was super-simple – you just throw in the washed rice and water according to the measurements specified in the booklet, turn it on and forget about it. The rice not only turns out perfectly cooked each time, but the 'warm' function it automatically switches to, when cooked, means it is ready to serve whenever you're ready. The steamer basket is a clever addition, as it means you can get vegetables, or even fish or chicken, steamed simultaneously. The cooking bowl is non-stick and dishwasher-safe, making it easy to clean.

What we didn't like: An additional timer function would be nice – my quinoa wasn't cooked as well as I'd like, and I had to turn it back on and manually turn it off, halfway through.

To buy: Dhs325, available at Tavola.

User tip

Add a bit more water than recommended in the booklet, if you like your rice or cereals well-cooked.

Lakeland crockpot sauté rice cooker

This family sized cooker is versatile and super convenient for working mums, as you can cook an entire meal in it in just half an hour. The snazzy all-black rice cooker looks elegant, and comes with a measuring cup, rice paddle, and an instruction manual with recipes to get you started.



What we liked: A rice cooker is probably one of the most used gadgets in our kitchen, but from all the different ones I've used so far, this latest model seemed the most state-of-the-art. The 1.8 litre removable non-stick pot allows you to cook rice for up to 4-5 people. It also has three settings: sauté, cook and an automatic warm feature, which allows you to cook a variety of different dishes, such as rice pudding, Chinese fried rice, and even fettuccini with apple, shrimp and curry sauce. We decided to make Thai rice – which had the right amount of stickiness – and a simple stir fry; which proved the efficiency of the sauté function.

What we didn't like: The lid has a very loose fit, and rattles when the rice is being cooked. It also boiled over at one point, which caused a bit of a mess. It is important to follow usage instructions to the T, as otherwise, you will end up with issues such as the rice sticking to the bottom of the pan.

To buy: Dhs299, at Lakeland.

User tip

The removable pot gets boiling hot, so use oven gloves or a thick cloth to prevent scalding your fingers.

Russell Hobbs rice cooker

There's nothing better than simply placing your ingredients into a rice cooker, and letting it do its work. This handy kitchen gadget sits neatly on a kitchen counter and is perfect for steamed rice. With features such as a 1.5 litre bowl (7 cups of rice), additional aluminium steaming basket for vegetables and fish, warming function, and a measuring cup, spoon and steaming rack, this gadget can also be used for risottos and other rice-based dishes.

What we liked: The simple and well-built rice cooker has a durable feel and is quite sturdy. The buttons are straightforward to operate, and we like the fact that the machine is fairly easy to use; simply add water and rice into the bowl, and it cooks until the water has been absorbed. Once done, it automatically switches to the warming function. I love fresh steamed vegetables and fish, and so the steaming tray in the cooker is quite handy, as all the cooking can be done in the cooker itself. The rice turned out not too dry or sticky, which is great, as I can never achieve this when cooking on a hob or gas.

What we didn't like: If you forget to wipe the outer surface when you remove the bowl, the condensation of steam flows down and creates a mess on the table or kitchen countertop.

To buy: Dhs99, at Spinneys and Waitrose supermarkets.



User tip

If you like fluffy rice, let it stand for five to ten minutes, before opening the lid.

What products would you like to see reviewed in the magazine? ✉ Tell us on feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com or [facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme](https://www.facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme).

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A photograph of two children with tiger face paint. The child in the foreground is a boy with white face paint and black stripes, looking to the side with his mouth open. The child in the background is a girl with yellow face paint and black stripes, smiling. They are both wearing striped shirts. The background is blurred, showing a colorful, possibly outdoor, setting.

MAZINA

IT'S ALWAYS A FUN-FILLED

Family Brunch
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★ We ask the pros to tell us about the cookbook they can't live without.

Gavin Gleeson, Executive chef of Wheeler's DIFC

"My favorite cookbook is *The French Laundry* by Thomas Keller (Artisan). I first came across it in London when working in a one star Michelin restaurant. I was quite amazed by his theories, concept and passion – he was using ingredients I had never heard of, and cooking in ways I'd never seen. The book comes everywhere with me, and it's a great reminder that when food is getting so complicated, simplicity is still the best way."

Watch this:

★ **Peeta Planet on Dubai One, Wednesdays at 9pm and Fridays at 6pm**



An innovative home-grown concept in which the social media savvy founders of Wild Peeta, the Al Awadhi brothers, travel around the world, using their social media followers as destination guides, this travel and food show has the brothers sampling different foods, and meeting with local entrepreneurs. We wish the production looked a little less staged, however, and there was more travel and less talk!



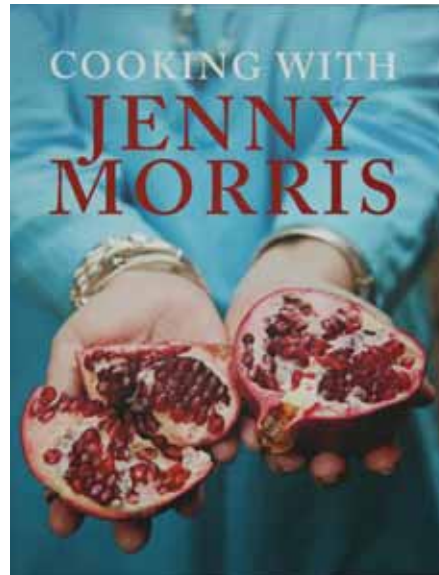
Download this:

★ **Two for One Go, From Dhs199 for a year on iPhones and Android devices**

This is the discount voucher module for the mobile generation! Offering a variety of buy-one-get-one-free discounts on restaurants – including leading names like The Gramercy – spas, and activities around Dubai, the app is easy to use. On the downside, you can't use a voucher for repeat visits, and the listings don't carry telephone numbers or pricing info.

Culina-reads

Reviews of the latest cookbooks, food shows and mobile apps.



★ **Cooking with Jenny Morris** (Sunbird publishers)

If watching the South African 'Giggling Gourmet' chef live in action at Taste of Dubai this year whetted your appetite for her cooking, then pick up this book. A selection of creative, practical, do-able recipes categorised into humorously – and a tad naughtily – titled sections such as 'Prawnography', 'Clucking or Quacking', 'Oh, you saucy thing', and 'Knead me', cover everything from breakfast ideas to soups, noodles, salads, sides, breads, desserts. There's even a little section in the back on pickles, jams and preserves. Peppered with personal anecdotes, quirky foodie quotes – as well as the occasional photo of Jenny's family and friends – and drizzled with Jenny's signature humour, the book is as much a joy to leaf through on a lazy afternoon, as it is a ready reckoner for uninspired moments in the kitchen.

Dhs182, available at Magrudy's.



Skinny bitch: Ultimate everyday cookbook by Kim Barnouin (Running Press)

Not so much a recipe book as a guide to healthy eating, Kim brings back the tough

love-style approach to food, which became a best-selling phenomenon in 2005. In the new avatar, the book starts off with an introduction to sustainability – covering everything from food miles to the importance of organic – then goes on to talk about ways to 'bitchify' the kitchen, which in other words, means ways to give it a healthy makeover. Written in a chatty style meant to appeal to its target audience of a modern, conscious woman, the book covers everything – from pantry shopping lists to must-have pots and pans, making it a bible for anyone wanting to cook and eat healthy. Recipes include über-healthy dishes like Tofu saaf with brown rice, and Tempeh no-meatloaf. But don't worry, it's not all California-style, vegan, tree-hugging, hippie food – there's also real, wholesome options like apple cinnamon granola, and butternut squash soup in there!

Dhs82, available at Jashanmal books.



Fresh Flavour Fast (Martha Stewart Living)

A fuss-free, handy book that does exactly what it says on the tin, these recipes from the Martha Stewart Living kitchens are divided into breakfast; sandwiches,

burgers and pizza (that's when you know it's an American book!); appetisers; salads; soups and stews; pastas; main courses and so on – basically, exactly the sort of thing a modern, urban cook would need to feed the family. The flavours are mostly western, with a big Italian influence, and some Asian touches thrown in for good measure. Classic favourites are given a modern twist (BLT salad, anyone?), and there are healthy options aplenty. The 'Stretch it' option on some recipes are particularly handy, which give you ideas to create two meals from one. Accompanied by stunning photography, and with timings clearly marked on most, this is a go-to book when cooking in a hurry. We love the 'Tips and techniques' section at the back, which offers a handy picture guide to mastering basic techniques such as 'peeling an avocado' and 'working with herbs'.

Dhs122, available at Jashanmal books.



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Tried & tasted

Each month, we review two of the city's top tables.

Italian



Where: Rococo, Sofitel Dubai Jumeirah

What's it like: I was looking forward to trying out the new menu at this elegant restaurant, a refined alternative to the casual sidewalk café-style eateries of JBR Walk. A glittering crystal wall greets you at the entrance, and a purple-themed décor scheme creates a chic, modern setting.

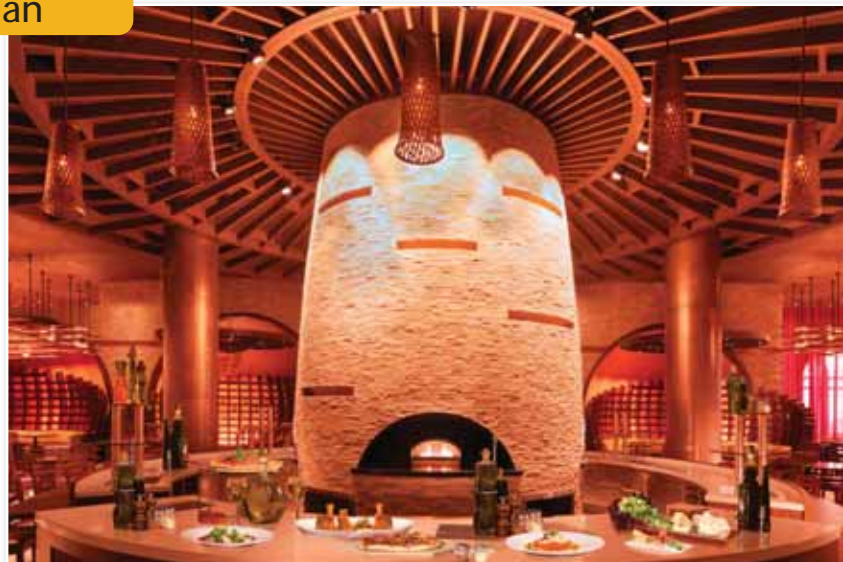
Their new menu includes a selection of the usual suspects, from antipasti to pizzas, and is refreshingly easy to navigate. But, if nothing catches your fancy, fear not, as the chef likes to step out of his kitchen now and then, and talk guests through what he can come up with off-menu, depending on what's available in the kitchen on the day. We, however, found plenty to interest us in the menu, and after knocking back the delicious shot of pumpkin soup served as an amuse-bouche, I opted to start with an angus beef carpaccio, topped with quail egg, truffle oil and a parmesan biscuit – a delectable adventure of tastes and textures. My partner's hearty broad bean soup, with pecorino and sour cream, couldn't have been more different experientially, but was equally flavourful. A lovely minty palate cleanser later, I went with the chef-recommended crispy skin Atlantic salmon with cauliflower purée and baby vegetables on the side, for mains – the fish was perfectly cooked, pink inside and crunchy on the outside. My partner couldn't resist the lure of the faux wood-fired pizza oven glowing behind the bar, and decided to go for a traditional tomato, mozzarella, truffle fragrance and porcini mushroom topping, on a light, thin crust, that any Italian mama would be proud of. The tiramisu came highly recommended, as the chef recreates

an authentic version here – it didn't disappoint, with the fluffy mascarpone, and coffee offering a subtle kick. The only blip on my radar of an otherwise good evening was the service, which, while attentive, was on the slow side.

Best for:
An intimate date

If you want to go: Around Dhs400 for 3-course dinner for two, without drinks. Call 04-4484743.

- Sudeshna Ghosh



Where: Ronda Locatelli, Atlantis The Palm

What's it like: Giorgio Locatelli's presence is definitely seen in the menu at his establishment, and with the announcement of the spring menu, featuring seasonal ingredients such as white asparagus, we knew we had to try it. Located in one of Dubai's iconic hotspots, Atlantis The Palm, the restaurant was bustling even on a Monday night. The warm, rustic vibe offered a great pick-me-up for my weekday blues.

The restaurant's focal point is the wood-fired brick oven, which was mostly surrounded by children, eager to see their pizzas being made in front of their eyes. After tucking into the basket of fresh breads, we turned to the helpful wait staff for advice on what to order. To begin with, my partner and I ordered the Fritto misto – Italian tempura fried zucchini and vegetables, which had the perfect crunch – and Burrata with pickles, which we devoured in minutes. The burrata was fresh, gooey and absolutely divine – a definite highlight of the meal. For mains, the seafood platter came recommended, but we also wanted to try the Tender beef with white asparagus and Marsala sauce from the spring menu, so we opted to share both! While the beef wasn't my favourite, my partner enjoyed it, as it was cooked to his liking. I, on the other hand, loved the subtle sweetness in the white asparagus. The seafood platter had everything from lobster and tiger prawns to squid and tuna steaks, with the lobster being another favourite as every bite was juicy and tender.

Best for:
A family dinner

We were unsure about dessert, but after a look at the menu and recommendations from the staff, we decided to share the limoncello ice cream dessert with berries, which was light and refreshing, with its citrusy flavours. **If you want to go:** Approximate price for dinner for two is Dhs800, without drinks. Call 04-4262626.

- Nicola Monteath

Flavours of the month

Our pick of the best restaurant offers, promotions and deals this month.

✴ Eat local!

Head down to K Grill, at Kempinski Hotel Mall of the Emirates, on a Friday evening, to pick your favourite locally sourced fish and seafood, from the market-style display, and have it prepared to your liking. A live sushi station and Emirati dessert station is also available at this weekend theme night. *Every Friday evening, from Dhs250 per person (Dhs125 for children). Call 04-4095999.*



K Grill, Kempinski Hotel Mall of the Emirates



✴ Spa and lunch!

Okku has teamed up with Mandara spa to offer a unique lunchtime treat. De-stress with a 50-minute Balinese massage or 25-minute express body massage at the spa, before moving to the chic Japanese restaurant for a healthy lunch, consisting of organic green tea and miso soup, followed by the O style Hamachi carpaccio or O style prawn tempura rolls, and Yuzu saikyo miso black cod or Okku chicken teriyaki. *Available daily for lunch, from Dhs199 per person. Call 04-5018777.*

✴ Meaty Mondays

If you find yourself craving a good piece of steak, make your way down to Legends at Dubai Creek Golf and Yacht Club on a Monday night. The Let's Meat on a Mondays promotion offers a variety of top grade cuts including wagyu; charolais ribeye; striploin and tenderloin, from Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, France, Argentina and the US. Selected beverages, sides and sauces are also served. *Every Monday night, from Dhs200 per person, call 04-2956000.*

✴ Brazilian bites

Prepare yourself for a meat challenge at the Friday Brazilian brunch at Frevo, Fairmont the Palm, and tackle 15 cuts of meat, served at your table by passadores (meat waiters). But before you begin the churrasco experience, treat yourself to a selection of fresh salads and seafood, as well as black beans and crispy polenta. Refresh your palate with Caprinhas, the signature cocktail, and end your meal with heavenly sweet treats like flambé fruits and churros! *Every Friday, from Dhs295 per head, call 04-4573457.*

✴ Light up your table

Celebrate the Vietnamese Lantern festival at Hoi An, Shangri-La Hotel, Dubai, as it transforms into a traditional Vietnamese festive space, complete with colourful lanterns and candles, with a set menu dinner. *Available from May 15 onwards, for Dhs315 per head. Call 04- 4052703.*

✴ Viva Mexico!

Bring out the sombreros and enjoy Cinco de Mayo at El Sombrero, Sheraton Abu Dhabi hotel and resort. The all-you-can-eat-and-drink celebration will feature a selection of Mexican favourites including burritos and gorditas, refreshing beverages, and Mexican tunes played by the live band. *Available on May 5, for Dhs185 per head, call 02-6773333.*

✴ Seasonal highlights

The Spring tasting menu at At.mosphere, Burj Khalifa offers an à la carte or seven-course tasting menu, with highlights including king crab ravioli; slow-cooked foie gras; wagyu beef; red fruit soup with summer fruits, blueberry consommé and mint sorbet; and Fuji apple brûlée with pistachio and tarragon ice cream. *Available daily for dinner, set menu costs Dhs800 per head. Call 04-8883828.*



✴ Maifest mayhem

Gear up for the first Maifest hosted by Grand Hyatt Dubai, and feast on authentic German specialties such as schnitzel, currywurst (curry sausages) and Spargel (asparagus) from the special à la carte menu. You could also try the Friday brunch and avail the special three-for-two offer (three people eat for the price of two), as you enjoy the live band.

Available Wednesday through Saturday, until May 11, from Dhs180 per head. Call 04-3172222.

✴ Healthy family treat

Want a family weekend lunch with a difference? Bocca restaurant at Hilton Abu Dhabi has recently launched an all-organic Friday lunch, where you can enjoy a selection of nutritious offerings such as Tuscan bean & vegetable soup and Pan seared wild Atlantic Tuna.

Available on Fridays, from Dhs299 per person, call 02- 6811900.

✴ It's a steal!

Who doesn't love a Karaoke session to de-stress and have a little fun every now and then? Head to Hibiki Karaoke lounge at Hyatt Regency Dubai this month, as they celebrate their 16th anniversary this month, and offering a selection of 16 dishes, including pizzas, buffalo wings and onions rings, as well as innovative cocktails such as Bay breeze and Cuba libre, for just Dhs16 each. Musical talent not included!

Available Monday through Saturday until May 31, call 04-3172222.

✴ Seafood fiesta

Sate your tastebuds with a nine-course set menu of fresh seafood delicacies at the dazzling Cavalli club restaurant and lounge. On the menu is a trilogy of tartar (smoked blue marlin with dried passion fruit; tuna with avocado; and sword fish with dried lemon powder), as well as fried calamari with harissa sauce, creamy cod croquettes and live lobster either grilled, or cooked as a thermidor, or served with pasta.

Available every Saturday, from Dhs495 per head. Call 800Cavalli (2282554).

✴ Bon appétit!

Gather the girls and visit Sunken Garden at The Ritz-Carlton, DIFC, to try a traditional French afternoon tea experience. Relish warm mise en bouche, French sandwiches, hand-made pastries and a selection of teas and coffees.

Available daily, from Dhs195 per head, call 04-3722222.



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DOHA diaries

This month's launch of *BBC Good Food ME* is probably the latest indicator of how buzzing the food and restaurant scene in Doha has become.



The modern West Bay area is emerging as a culinary hub

The luxe St Regis hotel is home to several top restaurants

Gourmet food from Gordon Ramsay, just one of the celebrity chefs to have opened up restaurants in Doha

In a few short years, Doha has gone from being a sleepy, oil-rich Gulf state to being well on its way to becoming a world class city, playing host to several high profile international sporting events, and a rapidly developing tourism infrastructure. Recent projects such as the West Bay area, and Pearl Qatar, have created a modern, cosmopolitan environment for top notch hotels and restaurants to set up shop, and placed it firmly on the global radar. Whether it's leading hotel chains, or the best known international celebrity chefs, everyone seems to want a piece of Doha now!

"In just five years, the Doha restaurant scene has transformed itself from being stagnant, out of date and uninspiring into a new, vibrant and exciting scene that puts many other cities in the

region to shame," says Jonathan Parsons, editor of restaurant website, Dining in Doha. "You only need to look at Doha's towering West Bay area to see how much things have changed. Five years ago the area was dead; the only thing bringing people into the area was a ten year old mall. Today, West Bay houses some of the finest hotel and restaurant brands in the world."

Gerald Tan, writer for Doha-based website todotogo.qa, adds, "A few years ago, you could have a great meal at a luxury hotel or a fantastic shawarma on the street corner with scarce options in between. Today, that scene is more vibrant than ever. More familiar brand names are opening outposts, those as grand as Hakkasan for uber-posh Asian food, to more casual spots including Wagamama and Magnolia Bakery."

Clearly this is catering to a hunger for more and varied dining options of a high standard, a result of both a growing population, as well as increasing sophistication in people's tastes. "The population of Qatar has almost doubled in size in just ten years, a phenomenon that has brought an influx of impressive restaurants, bars and cafes," explains Jonathan.

What is unique is the number of Michelin star chefs who seem to be making a beeline for Doha. A-list chefs like Alain Ducasse, who has opened his first Middle East restaurant at the architecturally stunning Museum of Islamic Art, and Gordon Ramsay, who has lent his name to not one, but two new restaurants – Opal and Gordon Ramsay Doha – at the luxurious St Regis Doha, are examples.

"In just over a year, Doha has seen an influx of Michelin-starred chefs on our shores, all bringing their own brand of culinary magic. We're being treated to dizzying dessert trolleys after full-blown degustation courses from the likes of Guy Savoy and Alain Ducasse," Gerald says. "Both have had to adapt to local customs of serving haute cuisine sans alcohol because their restaurants not housed within a five-star hotel. That in itself is another leap ahead."

It is not just über-luxe hotels and big-ticket chefs however, Doha offers a nice balance of fine dining with the more authentic, local experiences. Souq Waqif is a case in point. A heritage village which has been built in a traditional style to showcase Qatar's culture and architecture, Souq Waqif is home to a multitude of independent restaurants, and casual cafes typically filled with locals and expats enjoying shisha in the evenings. There's a refreshingly different 'foodie scene' that is evolving in this area, not dissimilar to the Katara Cultural Village (located near West Bay) which is also home to a number of home-grown restaurants.

There's no doubt that things will only get bigger and better from here. As Jonathan succinctly sums it up, "To people that doubt the Doha restaurant scene is going places, I tell them this – three of the most famous Michelin starred chefs have set up shop in Doha in as many years. Where else in the world can you say that?"

The latest food news, trends and events in Doha



Chef alert!

The luxurious Kempinski Residences and Suites, Doha, is ready to take the Qatar capital's dining scene by storm, with the arrival of new executive chef Mike Scheumann. Having travelled all over the world, from Bermuda, to Egypt, Maldives, New Zealand, Australia and Dubai, and served celebrities such as Tina Turner and Michael Jordan, Mike is now bringing forth his culinary experience by introducing a new menu at Aroma restaurant, featuring fusion fresh, healthy and creative dishes. *Call +974 44053333.*

Healthy regime

Looking to shape up? Fitness with Food, a London-based company is now offering combination training programmes in Doha, to help you get fit while following a healthy eating diet regime, in an effort to tackle rising obesity in the city. Founded by Haitham Khalid, a Le Cordon Blue chef and a YMCA qualified trainer, the combination training programme includes a full body analysis every two weeks, two fitness training sessions per week, one shopping trip ever three weeks, and one professional cooking class, in the comfort of your home! *A six-week programme costs QR7,000, call +974 55985495.*



Gourmet arrival

The popular Michelin-starred Cantonese restaurant, Hakkasan, has finally opened its first outlet at The St. Regis, Doha. Try out signature dishes such as the Peking duck with caviar, jasmine tea smoked Wagyu beef ribs and grilled Chilean seabass with Chinese honey, in the surrounding of a stunning terrace, surrounded by verdant gardens and cascading wooden pavilions. The restaurant also offers private event areas, such as the Lin-Ling lounge, for large and small gatherings alike. *Call +974 44460105.*

Food fest

The Museum of Islamic Art turned into a culinary hub last month, when Doha residents flocked there for the four-day Qatar International Food Festival. The festival showcased local and international restaurants, with visitors sampling gourmet flavours from around the world. Highlights included the Qatar Airways' cooking theatre, where celebrity chefs such as Vineet Bhatia, Ramzi Choueri and German junior master chef Valentin Krapf, taught visitors how to prepare a selection of dishes from their culinary repertoire. Guests also joined in on exciting dining concepts such as Dine in the Sky, whereby they ate on a suspended platform which overlooked the bustling city; and the Barbecue and Afternoon tea floats, which served a selection of barbecue or afternoon tea treats (depending on the time), which were savoured on a floating boat out at sea. We can't wait for next year's edition!



New in town

Souq Waqif boutique hotels has launched its seventh dining outlet, Argan, an authentic Moroccan restaurant. Moroccan cuisine is given a contemporary flair at this restaurant, which features traditional décor and vibrant colours. Don't miss the flavoursome harira soup, tagines, couscous and pastillas, to get a true taste of Morocco. *Call +974 44336666.*



A touch of Asia

Calling all Asian foodie fans in Doha! The Amari Doha has recently given their restaurant menus an Asian flair. A selection of Thai dishes will be served in a sharing platter-style at Musheireb restaurant, while the Al Jasla Lounge will be serving Asian-inspired sandwiches, light bites and refreshing mocktails – perfect for a quick bite or catch up with the girls! *Call +974 44338888.*

3 to try: DOHA

Three essential culinary experiences in the Qatari capital.



Opal by Gordon Ramsay



Jones the grocer



The Dining Room, Fraser Suites



CHECK IN

If you're a frequent traveller to Doha, or even a newbie to the city about to find their feet, Fraser Suites offers a luxurious home-away-from-home experience. With a convenient location just minutes from the airport, and easy access to the city centre, the serviced hotel apartment complex offers spacious suites complete with walk-in closets, fully equipped private kitchenette, and

wi fi access. A rooftop pool plus fitness centre and spa make up the leisure facilities.

Visit fraserhospitality.com or call +974-44243444 for more.

Doha's up and coming dining scene means that both for residents and regular visitors, restaurant choices have gone up not just in quantity, but quality as well. Here are three great options for anyone looking for a casual, unpretentious dining experience, that have all opened up in the last year.

1 Michelin-star pub grub

Don't let the name Gordon Ramsay fool you into thinking it's all fine dining – Opal by Gordon Ramsay Doha is a casual counterpart to Gordon Ramsay Doha, with both restaurants located next to each other in the luxurious St Regis hotel. The plush yet relaxed setting, with clean, simple lines, parquet flooring and accents of purple in leather chairs, and an outdoor terrace offering extensive sea views, is perfect for the bistro-style comfort food with a gourmet twist. Think burgers with hand-cut chips, chicken wings, steaks, grilled fish and pizza. Whether it's for a family outing or a lunch meeting, you can't go wrong with a meal here. Call +974-4460000.

2 Everyday gourmet

Fans of Jones the Grocers' fresh, mod-Oz style flavours and vibe-y ambience will love the Doha outpost of this Australian chain. Conveniently located in high end city-centre mall, The Gate, the Doha Jones café offers communal-style seating, tempting deli offerings, and walk-in cheese room. The recently revamped menu includes delicacies like pan-seared snapper fillet and warm chicken breast salad, all the dishes having one thing in common – fresh, natural ingredients and simple, wholesome flavours. A firm favourite with the ladies who lunch, as well as busy office-goers, the restaurant offers a buzzing atmosphere and top food. You'll find it hard not to grab a few gourmet goodies on the way out – whether it's pasta, artisanal bread or unique finds like truffle caviar. www.jonesthegrocer.com.

3 A taste of Arabia

There isn't a dearth of authentic Arabic in the city, but the Dining Room restaurant at Fraser Suites Hotel is a good option both for hotel residents as well as those living and working nearby. A large airy space with floor-to-ceiling windows and a bright colour scheme, a natural contemporary feel is given an Arabian touch with the velvet chairs, gold and wood paneling, and traditional fixtures. Headed up by executive chef Furkan Mohammed Imtiaz Khan, the restaurant offers an array of traditional Lebanese-style dishes, from delicious mezze and fresh salads to succulent grills and seafood. **GF**

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Classic Amatriciana
bucatini, recipe p40

IN THIS SECTION



* Quick, good-value weeknight suppers, P26



* Add some Mediterranean magic to any meal, P42



* Impressive desserts you can make ahead, P60

Home Cooking

Inspiring recipes for easy everyday meals and stylish weekend entertaining

Make it tonight

Fast supper fixes on a budget. Recipes SARA BUENFELD Photographs WILL HEAP

Cheesy turkey nuggets with smoking chips

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS • COOK 30

MINS **Easy**  **Low fat** **Low cal** **Good for you** **Folate**

1 egg
3 tbsp finely grated Parmesan
3 garlic cloves, 1 crushed,
2 finely chopped
500g turkey breast pieces,
large chunks halved to make
16 pieces in all
750g large potatoes, cut into thick
chips
2 tbsp sunflower oil
65g fresh breadcrumbs
½-1 tsp smoked paprika
Salad, to serve

1 Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Beat the egg in a bowl with the Parmesan, crushed garlic and some seasoning, then stir in the turkey pieces.

2 Toss potatoes in the oil, then spread out on a baking tray and bake for 15 mins.

3 Meanwhile, toss the turkey into the breadcrumbs and spread out on another baking tray. Take the chips from the oven and tip in a bowl with the chopped garlic, paprika and sea salt. Mix well, then spread back out on the tray and return to the oven with the turkey. Bake for 10-12 mins, then serve with a salad.

PER SERVING 429 kcals, protein 41g, carbs 43g, fat 11g, sat fat 3g, fibre 4g, sugar 2g, salt 0.7g

All the family
will enjoy this

Stir-fry chilli beef wraps

SERVES 2 ● PREP 10 MINS PLUS
OPTIONAL MARINATING ● COOK 5
MINS **Easy** **Low fat** **Good for you** **Fibre**

Vit C **Iron** **3 of 5-a-day**

150g thin-cut frying steak,
very thinly sliced
1 tsp mild chilli powder
2 good pinches of ground cumin
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
2 tsp sunflower oil
1 yellow pepper, deseeded,
quartered and sliced
1 red onion, thinly sliced

2 tomatoes, chopped
400g can black beans, drained
Good handful of fresh coriander
4 soft tortilla wraps

1 Put the steak in a bowl with the spices and garlic, and stir well. If you have time, leave to marinate for a couple of hrs. Heat the oil in a wok, then tip in the beef and fry for just 1-2 mins, until it changes colour but is still on the rare side. Remove the beef to a plate.
2 Add the pepper and half the onion, and stir-fry in the juices – add a splash

of water to get things going and stop it burning. Stir in the tomatoes and beans, and heat through with plenty of seasoning, then stir in most of the coriander.

3 Meanwhile, heat the tortillas. The best way is directly on the gas flame, as it gives them a lovely charred flavour. Stir the beef into the beans and heat briefly. Serve with the tortillas and the reserved onion and coriander.

PER SERVING 642 kcals, protein 33g, carbs 102g, fat 12g, sat fat 3g, fibre 14g, sugar 11g, salt 1.1g >>



Ready in only 15 minutes

Salmon & horseradish burgers

SERVES 4 • PREP 20 MINS •

COOK 8 MINS Easy Calcium

UNCOOKED BURGERS ONLY

4 skinless salmon fillets or
1 large piece (about 500g)
1 tbsp creamed horseradish
Zest of 1 lemon and 2 tsp juice
Small handful of dill, chopped
1 tbsp vegetable oil
4 tbsp mayonnaise
4 poppy seed rolls, split
85g bag watercress
25g cucumber, sliced
4 radishes, thinly sliced

1 Put the salmon, horseradish, lemon zest and half the dill in a food processor, season and blitz to a fine paste.

2 Shape the mixture into 4 burgers. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and cook the burgers for 4 mins on each side until golden.

3 Meanwhile, mix the remaining dill with the mayonnaise and spread a little onto the base of each roll. Toss the watercress in the lemon juice and put a handful on each roll base. Top with a burger and finish with slices of cucumber and radish. Replace roll tops to serve, if you like, or serve them alongside.

PER SERVING 653 kcs, protein 32g, carbs 31g, fat 44g, sat fat 7g, fibre 3g, sugar 4g, salt 1.1g



Tuna, olive & rocket pizzas

SERVES 2 • PREP 15 MINS • COOK 12

MINS Easy Calcium 1 of 5-a-day

145g pizza base mix (or same weight of bread mix)

2 tbsp tomato purée

185g can tuna in oil, drained, oil reserved

Plain flour, for dusting

1 tbsp capers

125g mozzarella

10 pitted Kalamata olives

1 small red onion, halved and thinly sliced

Small handful of rocket

1 Heat oven to 240C/220C fan.

Tip the pizza mix into a bowl and make up following pack instructions. Cover the bowl with a cloth and leave for a few mins.

2 Meanwhile, mix the tomato purée with 4 tbsp water, 1 tbsp oil from the tuna and some seasoning.

3 Knead the dough for a few mins on a floured surface, then halve and put each piece, spaced apart, on a large oiled baking tray. Press with an oiled hand to make thin flat pizzas – they don't have to be perfectly round.

4 Spread with the tomato purée mixture, then top with the tuna, capers, cheese and olives. Bake for 10-12 mins. Serve scattered with the onion and rocket.

PER SERVING 596 kcs, protein 40g, carbs 38g, fat 31g, sat fat 12g, fibre 5g, sugar 4g, salt 2.3g

Like salmon?
You'll love these new burgers



Baked asparagus risotto

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS •

COOK 45 MINS Easy V GF

Low fat Low cal Good for you Folate 1 of 5-a-day

2 tsp olive oil

1 small onion, chopped

300g risotto rice

400ml can asparagus soup

850ml vegetable stock

Small bunch of parsley, chopped

300g asparagus, ends trimmed

10 cherry tomatoes, halved

25g Parmesan (or vegetarian alternative), grated

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Heat the oil in an ovenproof casserole dish, add the onion and cook for 5 mins until softened. Add the rice and cook for 1 min more, stirring to coat in the oil. Tip in the soup and stock, season and stir well to combine, then bring to the boil. Cover and place in the oven.

2 Bake for 15 mins, then remove the dish from the oven, give the rice a good mix, stirring in the parsley. Place the asparagus and tomatoes on top of the rice. Return to the oven, uncovered, for a further 15 mins. Scatter with the cheese to serve.

PER SERVING 403 kcs, protein 12g, carbs 70g, fat 8g, sat fat 4g, fibre 4g, sugar 6g, salt 1.3g GF

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Healthy meals for two

Exciting suppers that
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Recipes JENNIFER JOYCE

Photographs HOWARD SHOOTER

Meals on
a budget

Chicken, ginger & green bean hotpot

SERVES 2 EASILY DOUBLED ●

PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 25 MINS

Easy  Low fat  Low cal

½ tbsp vegetable oil
2cm piece ginger, cut into
matchsticks
1 garlic clove, chopped
½ onion, thinly sliced into half moons
1 tbsp fish sauce
½ tbsp soft brown sugar
250g skinless chicken thigh fillets,
trimmed of all fat and cut in half
125ml chicken stock
50g green beans, trimmed and
cut into 2.5cm lengths
1 tbsp chopped coriander
Steamed rice, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a saucepan over a medium-high heat. Add the ginger, garlic and onion, and stir-fry for about 5 mins or until lightly golden. Add the fish sauce, sugar, chicken and stock. Cover and cook over a medium heat for 15 mins.

2 For the final 3 mins of cooking, add the green beans. Remove from the heat and stir through half of the coriander. Serve with steamed rice and the remaining coriander scattered over.

PER SERVING 215 kcals, protein 30g, carbs 9g, fat 7g, sat fat 1g, fibre 2g, sugar 7g, salt 2.0g >>

Roasted harissa vegetables with kale & ginger pilaf

SERVES 2 EASILY DOUBLED ● PREP

15 MINS ● COOK 30 MINS Easy V

Low fat Low cal Fibre Vit C 4 of 5-a-day

½ small butternut squash (about 350g), peeled and cut into 3cm chunks

1 red onion, quartered

1 red pepper, cut into 3cm chunks

1 tbsp harissa, or to taste

Low-fat Greek yoghurt, to serve

FOR THE PILAF

½ tbsp olive oil

½ onion, thinly sliced

1 garlic clove, chopped

2cm piece ginger, peeled and finely chopped

½ red chilli, deseeded and sliced
100g kale or other greens, chopped

100g basmati rice

225ml vegetable stock

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Put the squash, onion and pepper on a large baking tray or 2 smaller ones. Toss them with the harissa and season. Roast for 30 mins or until golden and tender.

2 Meanwhile, make the pilaf. Heat the olive oil in a saucepan over a medium heat and add the onion, garlic, ginger and chilli. Season and cook for 5 mins or until the onion is translucent. Add the kale, rice and stock. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat to low, cover with a lid and cook for 10-12 mins or until tender. Serve with the roasted vegetables and some yoghurt.

PER SERVING 371 kals, protein 10g, carbs 68g, fat 5g, sat fat 1g, fibre 7g, sugar 19g, salt 0.5g





Chipotle black bean soup with lime-pickled onions

SERVES 2 EASILY DOUBLED • PREP 10 MINS PLUS PICKLING • COOK 25 MINS

Easy 2 of 5-a-day

Juice of 2 limes

2 small red onions, thinly sliced

½ tbsp olive oil

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

½ tbsp ground cumin

½ tbsp smoked paprika

½ tbsp chipotle paste, or Tabasco to taste

400g can black beans, drained and rinsed

400ml vegetable stock

Half-fat soured cream, coriander leaves and crisp tortillas, to serve

1 To make the lime-pickled onions, combine ½ the lime juice and ½ the onions in a small bowl, and season. Leave to pickle for 30 mins.

2 Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a saucepan over a medium-high heat. Add the garlic and remaining onions, and season. Cook for 8 mins or until the onions are translucent. Add the spices and chipotle purée, cook for 1 min, then add the beans, stock and remaining lime juice. Simmer for 15 mins, then purée in a blender.

3 Pour the soup into a clean pan to reheat. Serve with a little of the drained pickled onions, topped with a small drizzle of soured cream and some coriander, and the tortillas on the side.

PER SERVING 190 kcals, protein 9g, carbs 26g, fat 5g, sat fat 1g, fibre 10g, sugar 6g, salt 0.8g

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5 ways with carrots

Veg
box
ideas

See carrots in a whole new light with these creative recipes. Recipes ALLY BRIGHT
Photograph STUART OVENDEN

Sticky carrots with beans & feta

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK 15 MINS

Easy V Folate

Boil **300g baby carrots** until tender. In a heavy-based pan, melt **50g unsalted butter**. When foaming, add **2 tbsp golden caster sugar** and cook over a medium heat until golden and the sugar has dissolved. Add carrots and **410g canned butter beans**, drained and rinsed, and stir to coat well. Crumble over **200g feta** and scatter with a **handful roughly chopped parsley**.

PER SERVING 318 kcals, protein 11g, carbs 20g, fat 21g, sat fat 13g, fibre 3g, sugar 16g, salt 1.9g

Carrot & cumin burgers

SERVES 4 • PREP 20 MINS PLUS CHILLING •

COOK 10 MINS Easy V Low fat

In a bowl, combine **300g grated carrot**, **2 tbsp tahini** and $\frac{1}{2}$ **onion**, grated. Blend **200g chickpeas** in a food processor and add to the carrot mix with **1 beaten egg**, **50g breadcrumbs**, **1 tsp ground cumin**, **zest 1 lemon** and seasoning. Mix well and form into 4 burgers. Coat burgers in **1 tbsp cumin seeds**. Chill in the fridge for 30 mins.

Heat **2 tsp vegetable oil** in a pan. Cook the burgers for 4 mins each side, turning carefully.

PER SERVING 166 kcals, protein 7g, carbs 15g, fat 9g, sat fat 1g, fibre 4g, sugar 5g, salt 0.5g

Healthy carrot & sweet potato mash

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK 15 MINS

Easy V Low fat Fibre 2 of 5-a-day

Chop **500g carrots** and **500g peeled sweet potato**. Put in a pan of salted water and boil for about 15-20 mins until soft. Drain well and mash with **1 tbsp olive oil**. Season to taste. Delicious with roast chicken.

PER SERVING 177 kcals, protein 2g, carbs 34g, fat 4g, sat fat 1g, fibre 6g, sugar 16g, salt 0.2g GF

Carrot tzatziki

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS • NO COOK Easy V

Combine **200g grated carrots** with **2 crushed garlic cloves**, **300ml natural Greek yogurt** and **2 tbsp olive oil**. Season to taste and mix until well combined. Roughly chop a **handful mint**, stir through and serve straight away with **toasted pita bread**.

PER SERVING 171 kcals, protein 5g, carbs 8g, fat 13g, sat fat 6g, fibre 1g, sugar 7g, salt 0.2g

Thai carrot slaw

Thai carrot slaw

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS • NO COOK

Easy Low fat Vit C

Combine **4 large coarsely grated carrots**, **1 deseeded and finely sliced red pepper** and **1 small finely sliced red onion** in a bowl with **100g beansprouts**. Finely chop **1 small red chilli** and mix with **3 tbsp fish sauce**, **3 tbsp lime juice** and **2 tsp caster sugar**. Pour dressing over the slaw and stir through a **handful of roughly chopped coriander** just before serving.

PER SERVING 78 kcals, protein 4g, carbs 15g, fat 1g, sat fat none, fibre 4g, sugar 13g, salt 2.3g



Food styling ROSIE REYNOLDS | Styling STUART OVENDEN

SPONSORED BY PUCK

CUT OUT & KEEP RECIPES



Lasagna



Pumpkin soup



Cocktail dip



Chocolate ganache





Pumpkin soup

- 1 big onion, chopped
- 6 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tsp butter, combined with olive oil
- 1kg orange pumpkin, cubed
- 2l chicken stock
- 2 tsp butter, mixed with crushed garlic
- 1 cup Puck cooking cream

- 1 Fry the onion and garlic in a pan with the butter and olive oil mixture.
- 2 Add pumpkin cubes and the chicken stock and boil for 20 mins.
- 3 Blend the ingredients in a food processor.
- 4 Add Puck cooking cream and stir well.



PUCK COOKING CREAM

This cream has a neutral taste and doesn't curdle in heat. It's perfect for pastas, creamy soups and sauces, as well as heated desserts like crème caramel.

Lasagna

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 30ml olive oil | 40g pasta sheet |
| 20g onions, chopped | 40g parmesan cheese |
| 20g carrots, chopped | 40g mozzarella cheese, shredded |
| 20g celery, chopped | 500ml (2x250ml packs) Puck thick cream |
| 100g minced beef | 5g fresh basil |
| 100g tomato sauce | |

- 1 Pour olive oil into a casserole dish and heat. Add onions, celery and carrots.
- 2 Toss all the ingredients until golden in colour. Add minced beef and cook for 30 mins.
- 3 Add tomato sauce and cook for another 30 mins. Season with salt and pepper.
- 4 In a baking dish, start to make the lasagna layer. Ladle one cup of sauce spread along the bottom of the platter, then add pasta sheet, meat sauce, parmesan and mozzarella cheese. Add the Puck thick cream between each pasta sheet for all three layers.
- 5 Cook in the oven at 160C for 30 mins.
- 6 Adding a thick coat of Puck thick cream, and sprinkle with a generous amount of parmesan cheese. Gratiné in the oven until the top turns golden brown. Garnish with fresh basil and serve.



PUCK THICK CREAM

With a neutral taste and thick consistency, this cream is ideal when you need a richer taste – whether it's as an alternative to béchamel when gratinating, or as a filling for Arabic sweets.

Chocolate ganache (cake filling or topping)

- 500ml Puck whipping cream
- 500g dark chocolate
- 50g unsalted butter

- 1 Bring the cream to boil with butter. Add chocolate and mix well.
- 2 Chill the chocolate ganache before serving. Use it to cover the surface of any cake of your choice, such as vanilla cake, or as a filling.



PUCK WHIPPING CREAM

Beautifully fluffy when whipped (ideal temperature for whipping is 0-5C), this cream can be used for a variety of cakes and desserts, either as a decoration or filling.

Cocktail dip

- 85g (½ can) Puck cream
- 3 tbsp tomato ketchup
- 2 tbsp chilli sauce
- Few drops Tabasco sauce
- ½ tsp lemon juice
- Salt and pepper

- 1 Mix the Puck cream in a bowl. Add tomato ketchup, chilli sauce, Tabasco sauce, and lemon juice. Mix well
- 2 Season to taste. Serve with chips or crudités.



PUCK CREAM

The jelly-like texture of this cream makes it a tasty option on its own as a snack, combined with honey, jam or fruit as breakfast, or as a quick dip ingredient.

Kitchen notes

Nutrition advice, expert cooking tips and product picks for your pantry.

Urban farming



Want to plant vegetables and herbs this summer, but fear the soaring temperatures will damage your plants, and not to mention, hard work? If you have a large backyard, you might want to invest in the innovative 'farm in a box' concept from Agriculture box. For just Dhs6,500, you get the box, stand, roofing system (to protect plants from harsh sunlight), soil (organic, vegetarian compost, coco peat and

vermicompost mix), drainage and irrigation system, and a variety of seeds such as tomato, parsley, basil, coriander and rocket salad to get your gardening started. The handymen even deliver and install the box in your backyard! Visit agriculturebox.com.

Bountiful breakfasts, and more!

We've just discovered Go Organic, an online store that supplies all-organic produce such as fruit and vegetable boxes, home delivered weekly and bi-weekly. It's not just fruit and veg though, they also offer a weekly Breakfast box which includes a dozen local, organic, free-range eggs, organic fruit juice, flavoured milk, a breakfast cereal box, sunflower, pumpkin seed and soy flour bread rolls, and USDA certified organic fruits. Now there's no excuse to skip breakfast! Prices start from Dhs120, call 04-8877025.

Look what we found!

3 great new products for your kitchen



This Melona raw honey – made with pure honey and blended with carobs, grapes, almonds and hazelnuts – will be a big flavour improvement on supermarket brands. Dhs40, at Pantry café.



Enjoy these all-natural fibre-protein-and antioxidant-packed falafel chips, with a hummous or tahini dip, as a midday snack. Dhs15, at Easifood.com.



Give your salads, antipasti and pizzas an oomph, with these naturally sweet Roasted red peppers from Pelagonia's gourmet mezze range. Dhs24, at Spinneys supermarkets.

Reader tip of the month

If I have to use a stainless steel pan to fry eggs, I make sure to sprinkle some salt, heat it for a while, and then wipe it down with a kitchen paper towel before frying. The salt instantly transforms a regular stainless steel pan into a non-stick pan. - *Sahar Shabbir*



Got a great tip you want to share?

Get in touch with us on [facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme](https://www.facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme).

SMART FOOD SWAPS



Health update>

Patrick Holford, nutritionist and pioneer of the Low Glycemic Load diet (a measurement that estimates the rise of blood glucose levels after eating a certain food) shares three simple food rules to live by, that will help you lose and manage weight:

- 1 Eat no more than 40 GLs a day. This way, your body will stop producing more glucose than it needs, and you won't gain fat.**
- 2 Every meal should have proteins and carbohydrates. For breakfast, Patrick recommends oat cereals, instead of cornflakes, with a side of berries. He also suggests eating egg-based pasta instead of bread for lunch or dinner, as bread raises glucose levels.**
- 3 Graze, don't gorge. Patrick recommends eating small meals which include healthy snacks such as crudités with hummous, yoghurt with berries and low GL foods such as sweet potatoes, couscous and strawberries, to sustain energy throughout the day.**

Visit patrickholford.com for more information on the Low GL diet.

John's perfect pastas



Pasta is perfect for casual entertaining as it's quick to cook but can be dressed up with a delicious sauce to make an extra-special dish, as MasterChef UK judge John Torode has done here.



Pasta with pesto & fresh herbs

SERVES 5-6 • PREP 5 MINS •
COOK 15 MINS **Easy**

500g pasta shapes
100g baby spinach
50g walnuts, chopped
50g wild rocket
Small handful of flat-leaf parsley, leaves torn into finger tip-size pieces
Small handful of sage, leaves torn into fingertip-size pieces
Small handful of chives, snipped
Some basil and tarragon, torn into pieces
4 tbsp good-quality olive oil
100g Parmesan or veggie alternative, grated
FOR THE PESTO
50g toasted pine nuts
2 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
Handful of basil
Handful of flat-leaf parsley
50ml olive oil

1 Pound the pesto ingredients to a paste in a pestle and mortar or food processor.

2 Cook the pasta. Drain, return to the pan with the pesto and stir over a low-ish heat for 2-3 mins – not any longer or the sauce will go grey. Add the spinach and stir well for 1 min until it wilts. Add the walnuts, rocket, parsley, sage, chives, basil and tarragon, if using, and oil. Take off the heat and stir well before serving sprinkled with grated Parmesan.

PER SERVING (5) 748 kJals, protein 24g, carbs 79g, fat 40g, sat fat 8g, fibre 5g, sugar 4g, salt 0.49g

**Spiced squash pasta
with lime pickle**SERVES 8 • PREP 5 mins • COOK 30
mins **Easy**

2 tbsp vegetable oil
100g red curry paste
2 tbsp palm sugar or soft brown sugar
1 butternut squash, peeled, deseeded
and diced into 3-4cm chunks
3 lemongrass, crushed
2 x 400g cans coconut milk
2-3 big spoonfuls hot Indian lime pickle
500g bag fettuccine
Small bunch of coriander, chopped

1 Heat the oil in a wok or your largest wide-based pan. Add the curry paste and fry for 2 mins. Add the palm sugar

and cook for 4 mins until sticky and fragrant. This makes the sauce richer and sweeter. Add the squash and lemongrass (by keeping the sticks whole, you can take them out easily at the end). Stir well and cook for 2-3 mins, then pour in the coconut milk with the lime pickle. Bring to the boil and simmer for 20 mins over a medium heat until the squash is tender but not mushy.

2 When the squash is nearly ready, cook the pasta, then drain well. Pour half the sauce into a big bowl, then add the pasta. Mix well with tongs, then add the remaining sauce before scattering with coriander leaves to finish.

PER SERVING 490 kcals, protein 11g, carbs 62g, fat 24g, sat fat 15g, fibre 3g, sugar 14g, salt 0.86g >





Classic Amatriciana bucatini

SERVES 5-6 EASILY DOUBLED ●

PREP 5 MINS ● COOK 15 MINS

Easy (SAUCE ONLY)

2kg tomatoes – cherry, plum or ordinary, roughly chopped
250g beef bacon, cut into strips
2 small red chillies
500g bucatini
200g Pecorino, grated
Seasoning, to taste if required

1 Put the tomatoes into a food processor in batches and whizz to a fine pulp. Sieve into a large pan, in batches again, pressing through as much tomato as you can with a wooden spoon. Simmer for 20 mins until the sauce has reduced by a third to about 700ml. This homemade passata can now be frozen.

2 Meanwhile, put the beef bacon into a cold, large, heavy-based frying pan. Place over a medium heat – the fat will slowly melt and the bacon will cook. Add the whole chillies (don't worry, they come out at the end) and cook for 8-10 mins with the bacon until the bacon is sizzling and golden all over. Stir in the tomato sauce, bring to the boil and simmer on low heat for 4-5 mins.

3 Meanwhile, cook the pasta, then drain well. While still hot, tip it into the sauce, sprinkle with most of the cheese and stir well. Remove the whole chillies, dish the pasta onto plates and sprinkle with the remaining cheese.

PER SERVING (5) 747 kJ, protein 40g, carbs 86g, fat 28g, sat fat 13g, fibre 7g, sugar 15g, salt 3.47g



Rigatoni with spiced prawns, tomatoes & sausages

SERVES 5-6 ● PREP 5 MINS ●

COOK 20 MINS **Easy**

4 tbsp olive oil
2 shallots, diced
120g uncooked beef sausage, thinly sliced
6 large tomatoes, chopped
350g rigatoni
200g large prawns, shells and tails removed if necessary, chopped
2 large spring onions, thinly sliced, keep the whites and greens separate

1 Put the oil, shallots and a good grind of pepper in a large, cold frying pan. Cook over a low heat for 10 mins to soften.

2 Add the sausage, turn up the heat a little and colour. When the sausage releases its oil, add the tomatoes and a good pinch of salt. Stir for 10 mins until the tomatoes melt, keeping the sauce bubbling. Add 100ml water, bring to the boil, then simmer gently for a few mins.

3 Meanwhile, cook the pasta. Add the prawns to the sauce, bring back to the boil and cook for 1 min until the prawns change colour. Drain the pasta and stir into the sauce with the spring onion whites. Cook and stir for 1 min. Serve sprinkled with the spring onion greens.

PER SERVING (5) 462 kJ, protein 22g, carbs 60g, fat 17g, sat fat 4g, fibre 4g, sugar 8g, salt 1.14g

Add a Med twist to your weekend

Saturday nights will never be the same after you check out the Mediterraneo promotion at Shangri-la Hotel Dubai.



LAURENT BRUNACCI, EXECUTIVE CHEF AT SHANGRI-LA HOTEL DUBAI, TAKES US THROUGH THE EXCITING MEDITERRANEAN-THEMED PROMOTION AT THE ALL-DAY DINING RESTAURANT, DUNES CAFÉ:

“Dune’s Café features an open kitchen with various live cooking stations, including Indian, Italian, Arabic and BBQ stations. Every Saturday evening, we offer the Mediterraneo promotion, where

you can treat yourself to the modern and traditional flavours of Spain, Greece, Italy and Lebanon with specialties like homemade pasta and ravioli, seafood paella, mezze, gyros and an extensive cheese selection, along with authentic desserts.

It is a buffet-style dinner, but there are also live cooking stations that feature a live traditional Turkish doner kebab section, a pizza and pasta station, as well as a live seafood station where you will be able to select your piece of seafood and it will be prepared to order. Other delicacies like gyros, mezze and seafood paella are offered in the buffet section.

The Mediterranean encompasses a wide selection of flavours and cooking methods, making this a perfect choice for people who like a vast selection of dishes. So many countries in the Mediterranean offer different dishes, but they are all prepared similarly, using fresh, seasonal ingredients, and of course, with lots of olive oil! Most dishes are baked, barbecued or steamed, making it very healthy too.

The authenticity of the food is what sets us apart. As with all our other restaurants, we have people from the Mediterranean region preparing our menus and cooking the food. We take pride in the fact that we are one of the only hotels and restaurants in the city that offers that to its guests.

One of my favourite dishes from this theme night is the seafood paella – the different textures, flavours and scents all rolled into one dish make it exciting for me. I am also partial to the focaccia bread with basil and pesto dip, I think everyone has a weakness for bread and dip!

The extensive selection on offer makes this affordable for almost everyone, and with the price including house beverages, it is worthwhile for people wanting to enjoy a good night out, but are also price conscious. ”



There is plenty of choice at Dunes Café to suit all tastes:

- Thursday evening is Supper Club night, where you can feast on an extensive dinner buffet while enjoying specially made cocktails from the bar, and live entertainment. From Dhs215 per person Dhs310, including cocktails.
- Weeknights are no less exciting with the international dinner buffet offering specialty stations including Indian, Asian, pasta and a sushi station with maki, sashimi, edamame and miso soup. From Dhs175 per person, Dhs270 with unlimited beverages.

Modern Mediterranean

Whether it's for informal entertaining, or a family supper, you can't go wrong with Med-inspired dishes. These recipes are all surprisingly easy to make!



Mediterranean vegetables with lamb

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS • COOK 30 MINS **Easy** **Superhealthy** **Vit C** **3 of 5-a-day**

1 tbsp olive oil
250g lean lamb fillet, trimmed of any fat and thinly sliced
140g shallots, halved
2 large courgettes, cut into chunks
½ tsp each ground cumin, paprika and ground coriander
1 red, 1 orange and 1 green pepper, cut into chunks
1 garlic clove, sliced
150ml vegetable stock
250g cherry tomatoes
Handful of coriander leaves, roughly chopped

1 Heat the oil in a large, heavy-based frying pan. Cook the lamb and shallots over a high heat for 2-3 mins until golden. Add the courgettes and stir-fry for 3-4 mins until beginning to soften.
2 Add the spices and toss well, then add the peppers and garlic. Reduce the heat and cook over a moderate heat for 4-5 mins until they start to soften.
3 Pour in the stock and stir to coat. Add the tomatoes, season, then cover with a lid and simmer for 15 mins, stirring occasionally until the veg are tender. Stir through the coriander to serve.
 PER SERVING 192 kcs, protein 17g, carbs 11g, fat 9g, sat fat 3g, fibre 4g, sugar 10g, salt 0.25g

Tomato & feta pesto bites

MAKES 12 • PREP 20 MINS PLUS 20 MINS CHILLING • COOK 15-20 MINS

Easy

175g pack puff pastry
25g finely grated vegetarian Parmesan-style cheese
20g pack fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 tbsp pine nuts
100g vegetarian feta, crumbled
1 garlic clove, crushed
4 tbsp olive oil
12 small cherry tomatoes, halved, and black olives, to serve

1 Roll out the pastry on a surface lightly dusted with the grated cheese to just over 3mm thickness. Stamp out 12 rounds using a 6cm plain cutter and line a shallow 12-hole bun tin. Chill for 20 mins. Preheat oven to 200C/180C.
2 Prick each pastry base with a fork

and bake for 15-20 mins until golden. Remove from the tin and leave to cool on a wire rack.

3 Meanwhile, tear the leaves from the parsley stalks and put all but 12 of the small sprigs in a food processor with the pine nuts, then whizz until coarsely chopped. Then add the feta, garlic and oil and whizz to make a thick paste. Keep the reserved sprigs in a bowl of water in the fridge. *The pastry bases will keep in a tin for up to 2 days and the pesto will keep in the fridge overnight.*

4 To serve, dollop a spoonful of the feta pesto onto the tarts and top each one with two cherry tomato halves. Garnish with the reserved parsley sprigs. Arrange on a platter and hand round with a bowl of black olives.

PER SERVING 271 kcs, protein 7g, carbs 11g, fat 22g, sat fat 8g, fibre none, added sugar none, salt 0.96g





Mushroom lasagne

SERVES 8 • PREP 25 MINS PLUS
RESTING • COOK 1 HR 5 MINS **Easy**

50g butter
1 tbsp olive oil
1 large onion, sliced
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1kg mushrooms, sliced (chestnut are good for this)
250ml vegetable stock
1 tbsp tomato purée
375g pack fresh lasagne sheets
300g vegetarian Gruyère, grated
50g vegetarian hard cheese, finely grated
FOR THE BECHAMEL SAUCE
50g butter
2 tbsp plain flour
750ml full-fat milk

1 Make the béchamel sauce. Put the butter in a saucepan set over medium heat. When the butter sizzles, stir in the flour. Cook for 1 min, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat and pour the milk into the pan, whisking constantly.

Return the pan to low heat and cook for 5 mins, stirring constantly, until the sauce is smooth and creamy. Season.
2 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Put the butter and oil in a frying pan over high heat and add the onion and garlic. Cook for 5 mins until the onion has softened. Add the mushrooms, reduce the heat to medium and cook for 15 mins, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms are evenly cooked. Add the stock and tomato purée and increase the heat to high. Simmer rapidly until the liquid has reduced by half. Season.
3 Line the bottom of an oiled baking dish with lasagne sheets. Spread over a quarter of the béchamel sauce. Add one-third each of the mushrooms and grated vegetarian Gruyère. Repeat the process and finish with a layer of lasagne. Spoon over the remaining sauce and sprinkle with the grated hard cheese. Bake in the oven for 45 mins, until golden brown and bubbling. Leave to rest for 10 mins before serving.
 PER SERVING 527 kcs, protein 24g, carbs 35g, fat 32g, sat fat 19g, fibre 4g, sugar 7g, salt 1.2g



Greek-style filo pie

SERVES 1 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK
20-25 MINS **Easy**

2 sheets filo pastry, each one cut into quarters

25g melted butter

FOR THE FILLING

30g vegetarian feta, crumbled

30g curd cheese (like mozzarella)

30g plain yoghurt

½ medium courgette, grated

½ tbsp fresh mint, shredded

½ garlic clove, finely chopped

1 tomato, thinly sliced

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. In a bowl, combine the feta, curd cheese, yogurt, courgette, mint and garlic. Season with lots of freshly ground black pepper and a little salt.

2 Brush a shallow, individual pie dish with a little butter, then layer the pie: place a sheet of filo to line the dish, brush with butter then add another filo sheet followed by half the feta filling and tomato slices.

3 Repeat with another 2 sheets of filo, buttered in between, and the rest of the feta filling and tomato slices. Then fold over the excess filo and scrunch the rest of the sheets on top of the pie and brush with butter. Bake for 20–25 mins, until golden. >>

Tzatziki

Greek salad

Lamb, lemon
& dill souvlaki

Try our
cover
recipe!

Lamb, lemon & dill souvlaki

SERVES 4 AS MAIN OR 6 AS PART OF
A MEZE • PREP 20 MINS PLUS
MARINATING • COOK 6 MINS **Easy**

This recipe can be varied with different meats such as chicken or beef, and even fish. You can also use it to marinate a whole boneless leg of lamb.

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
2 tsp sea salt
4 tbsp olive oil
Zest and juice of 1 lemon
1 tbsp finely chopped fresh dill
700g lean lamb such as neck fillet or

**boneless leg, trimmed, then cut
into large chunks**
Pita or flatbread, to serve

1 Pound the garlic with sea salt in a pestle and mortar (or use a small food processor), until the garlic forms a paste. Whisk together the oil, lemon juice, zest, dill and garlic. Mix in the lamb and combine well. Cover and marinate for at least 2 hrs or overnight in the fridge. *If you're going to use bamboo skewers, soak them in cold water.*

2 If you've prepared the lamb the

VARY THE FLAVOUR

Replace the cucumber in the Tzatziki with grated cooked beetroot, or add some finely chopped and rinsed preserved lemons. For a twist on tradition, add chopped mint instead of the dill.

previous day, take it out of the fridge 30 mins before cooking. Thread the meat onto the soaked or metal skewers. Heat the grill to high or have a hot griddle pan or barbecue ready. Cook the skewers for 2-3 mins on each side, basting with the remaining marinade. Heat the pita or flatbreads briefly, then stuff with the souvlaki.
PER SERVING (4) 457 kcals, protein 34g, carbs none, fat 35g, sat fat 14g, fibre none, sugar none, salt 0.27g

Greek salad

SERVES 4 AS A SIDE – EASILY
DOUBLED FOR MAIN COURSE • PREP
15 MINS • NO COOK **Easy** **V**

**4 large vine tomatoes, cut into
irregular wedges**
**1 cucumber, peeled, deseeded, then
roughly chopped**
½ a red onion, thinly sliced
16 Kalamata olives
1 tsp dried oregano
**85g feta, cut into chunks (barrel
matured feta is the best)**
4 tbsp Greek extra virgin olive oil

Place all of the ingredients in a large bowl, lightly season, then serve with crusty bread to mop up all the juices.
PER SERVING 270 kcals, protein 9g, carbs 8g, fat 24g, sat fat 6g, fibre 3g, sugar 7g, salt 2.64g

Tzatziki

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS PLUS 1 HR
STANDING • NO COOK **Easy** **V**

Good for you

250g pot Greek yoghurt
**½ a cucumber, peeled, deseeded,
then coarsely grated**
1 garlic clove, crushed
3 tbsp chopped dill
2 tsp vinegar
pinch of sugar

Combine all of the ingredients in a bowl, season with some salt, then mix well. Chill for 1 hr if time permits, letting the flavours infuse.

PER SERVING 79 kcals, protein 5g, carbs 2g, fat 6g, sat fat 7g, fibre none, sugar 2g, salt 0.12g



Raspberry & amaretti crunch cake

SERVES 6 ● PREP 20 MINS ● COOK 55-60 MINS Easy 🧊
CAKE ONLY

175g soft butter
175g golden caster sugar
3 eggs
140g self-raising flour
85g ground almonds
140g amaretti biscuits, roughly broken
250g punnet raspberries
TO SERVE
icing sugar, to dust
Single cream

1 Heat oven to 160C/140C fan. Butter and base line a loose-bottomed 20cm round cake tin. Put the butter, caster sugar, eggs, flour and almonds into a large bowl. Beat using an electric hand whisk until well blended.

2 Spread half the cake mixture in the lined tin. Scatter over half the amaretti biscuits then a third of the raspberries. Very lightly press into the cake mixture.

3 Dollop dessert spoonfuls of the remaining cake mixture over the amaretti and raspberries and spread evenly. Scatter the remaining amaretti and half the remaining raspberries over the top. Bake for 55-60 mins, until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.

4 Cool for 15 mins in the tin. Run a knife around the edge and turn out. The cake can be frozen now, or will keep for up to 2 days in a covered container in the fridge.

5 Remove from the fridge an hour before serving and lightly dust with icing sugar. Serve with the remaining raspberries and a little single cream.

PER SERVING 640 kcs, protein 12g, carbs 68g, fat 37g, sat fat 17g, fibre 4g, added sugar 34g, salt 0.92g GF

ADVERTISING FEATURE



A luxurious treat

Italian-style decadence made easy!

Porcini mushroom cake

SERVES 1 ● PREP 15 mins ● COOK 20 mins Easy

Knob of butter
1 shallot, chopped
15g porcini mushrooms, soaked in hot water
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 tbsp vegetarian Parmesan-style cheese
1 tbsp chopped fresh herbs, such as parsley
3 tbsp mashed potatoes
Flour, for dusting
1 egg, beaten
2 tbsp dried breadcrumbs
Vegetable oil, for frying
Baby herbs, to garnish
Truffle oil, for drizzling

1 Heat the butter in a small pan, fry the shallot for a few mins then drain the mushrooms and fry them with the garlic for 1-2 mins. Tip them into a small bowl and mix with half the cheese, all the herbs and the potato. Leave to cool.

2 Shape into a cake, chill in the fridge until firm, then dust in the flour and dip in the egg. Mix the remaining cheese with breadcrumbs and use to coat the cake.

3 When ready to cook, fry the cake in the oil for 3 mins each side until golden and hot. Drain on kitchen paper and season with salt. Top with the baby herbs and a drizzle of truffle oil.



The rare aroma of black truffles is captured in the La Tourangelle infused oil, which makes adding this precious flavour to any dish, super easy. Available at select supermarkets and markets.



Try this simple recipe from Chef Bucca to bring the soul of Mediterranean cuisine into your kitchen:

Mediterranean seafood salad

The seafood salad is a fresh and tasty appetizer made with prawns, octopus, cuttlefish and squid. You can season the salad with a lot of lemon and parsley.

SERVES 4

700g octopus
20 fresh shrimps
200g cuttlefish fillet
250g squid
50g chopped parsley
1 clove garlic, minced
2 tbsp lemon juice
3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 carrot, julienned
Salt and pepper, to taste

- 1 Wash all the fish under running water.
- 2 Place the octopus in a pot full of cold water and bring to the boil. Cook for 10 minutes with the lid.
- 3 Prepare the shrimps, removing the head, vein and the shell. Leave the tail intact. Pour some more water to the pot where the octopus is cooking and add the cuttlefish and the squid. Cook for an additional 5 minutes and add the shrimps. Let it cook for another 5 minutes (total cooking time 20 minutes).
- 4 Drain and allow to cool down for at least 2 hours in the refrigerator. Cut into little pieces, mix them together and season with the parsley, minced garlic, lemon juice, salt, olive oil, carrot and a pinch of black pepper before serving.



Soul food

The revamped menu at Zaytoun restaurant, Crowne Plaza Dubai Festival City, offers a refreshingly different take on Mediterranean food.

Zaytoun literally translates into olive in Arabic, and nothing sums up the spirit of the restaurant better – recently rebranded as a fully fledged Mediterranean restaurant, it serves up food from across the region (not just the popular Italian dishes), whether it's hard-to-find Greek cuisine, or delicacies from the Levant.

The neutral, dark-wood interiors are punctuated by canvases of quintessential Mediterranean imagery, such as old olive trees and beautiful seaside sunsets. Flooded with natural light from the floor-to-ceiling windows, which offer stunning views of the pool and creek beyond, the restaurant offers a relaxing ambience, but nowhere more so than in the lovely outdoor terrace.

The man responsible for the new menu, chef Francesco Bucca, from Sicily, brings with him a passion for not just his native cuisine, but for homely, generous food and a welcoming approach. His specialties include pizza dough and ice cream.

Your meal starts with an antipasto buffet that

showcases the broad range that Mediterranean cuisine covers, whether it's Italian grilled vegetables, or Lebanese hummous. The buffet also features a separate olive station, with over seven different varieties of olives sourced from different regions.

With your appetite whetted by the buffet starters, you can choose the mains from a menu that offers a variety of dishes that aren't that common in UAE restaurants, from Arabic soup or Tuscan, to Greek-style calamari, Italian pasta, Spanish risotto or Turkish lamb chops. The fresh grilled shrimps Mykonos – more giant prawns than shrimps – served with a delicate tzatziki sauce is highly recommended, as is the tuna served with caponata (an Italian eggplant relish) and asparagus. For dessert, your best options are the classic tiramisu or fresh fruits with ice cream – it offers the perfect light ending to a Mediterranean meal.

Visit diningdfc.com to find out more and to book.

zaytoun





zaytoun

Mediterranean Soul

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Eating the Mediterranean way

Now that the temperatures are rising, it's time to start eating light. Salvatore Barcellona, chef de cuisine at L'Olivo, Rixos The Palm Dubai, shares three light, fresh Italian dishes that are perfect for a quick weekday lunch or dinner. Photographs ANAS CHERUR



Italian-born Salvatore Barcellona trained at a culinary school in Palermo, Italy, before travelling

across the globe to gain experience in different countries including Germany and the US, over 17 years. He moved to Dubai in 2013, to head up L'Olivo, the new Italian fine dining restaurant at Rixos The Palm Dubai, as chef de cuisine.

Rustic vegetable salad with artichokes, rocket and mozzarella

SERVES 4 • PREP 13 MINS

• NO COOKING

40g carrots

60g red, green and yellow peppers

40ml extra virgin olive oil

80ml lemon oil

80ml white balsamic vinegar

90g rocket leaves

40g celery stalks

80g artichoke hearts

80g baby mozzarella

Salt and pepper

1 Marinate the carrots and peppers in the oils and vinegar for 3 hrs.

2 To serve, add the carrot mixture on top of the rocket leaves. Using a vegetable peeler, peel a celery stalk (discard the first layer) to make ribbons, and place over the carrot and peppers. Carefully place the artichoke heart on top, and the baby mozzarella on the side. Season and serve.

Coordinated by NICOLA MONTEATH | Styling LEEN AL ZABEN | Props from Crate & Barrel: 04-3990125



Free range chicken with pistachio and mushrooms

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS

• COOK 12 MINS

800g free range chicken breast

80g pistachios, ground

100g porcini mushrooms

160g portobello mushrooms

2 sprigs of thyme

2 garlic cloves

40g butter

90ml veal jus

Handful of herbs

FOR THE VEAL JUS

2 kg veal bones, roughly chop

1 onion, chopped

2 carrots, chopped

2 sticks celery, chopped

2 bay leaves

2 big sprigs of fresh thyme

Small bunch parsley

1 tsp peppercorns

3l cold water

1 Stuff the ground pistachio under the chicken skin. Season and roast at 190C for 15-18 mins.

2 Sauté the mushrooms, thyme and garlic in butter, for 3 mins or until softened.

3 To make the veal jus, add all ingredients to a large saucepan and cover with water. Bring slowly to the boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook for 45 mins or until the liquid reduces by two-thirds to around 1l. Cool for 10 mins, then strain into a jug to cool down. The stock can be made ahead and chilled or frozen for up to 1 month.

4 On a plate, pour the veal jus, add the sautéed mushrooms, and then the chicken on top. Serve with a handful of herbs sprinkled around.



Seafood stew with saffron, fennel and garlic bread

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS

• COOK 5 MINS

250g onions, sliced

100g garlic, sliced

150ml olive oil

300g fennel, split and cut into strips

1 bunch thyme, chopped

1 pinch saffron

4 bay leaves

1l chicken stock

1l fish stock

12 mussels

Two drops of apple vinegar

200g monkfish

90g tuna or seabass

8 giant prawns

90g tomatoes, skinned, deseeded and diced

2 slices of toasted garlic bread

1 Sweat the onions and garlic in olive oil. Add the fennel, thyme, saffron, bay leaf and the chicken and fish stock. Slowly add the apple vinegar and simmer until the fennel is soft – this should take around 5 mins.

2 Use the stock as your base for the stew and add mussels, all the fish and the prawns. Slowly add in the tomatoes.

3 Pour the stew into a bowl and garnish with sprigs of fennel. Serve with toasted garlic bread. [GF](#)



Forget throwing some in as an afterthought, nutritious, versatile cheese can be a hero ingredient, as TV chef James Martin shows US. Photographs PETER CASSIDY

The big cheese!

Baked cheese with quick walnut bread & pears

SERVES 4 • PREP 35 MINS • COOK 40-45 MINS **Easy** **V** **GF** BREAD ONLY

1 Camembert or Brie-type cheese in a box

Drizzle of walnut oil

3 pears, cored and thinly sliced

FOR THE BREAD

300g plain flour

200g wholemeal flour, plus a little extra for dusting

1 tsp salt

2 tsp bicarbonate of soda

100g walnuts, roughly chopped

284ml carton buttermilk

50ml olive oil

150ml milk

1 Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. To make the bread, mix the flours, salt, bicarbonate and the walnuts in a mixing bowl. Then stir in the buttermilk and oil, followed by enough milk to make a very soft, sticky dough.

2 Dust a baking tray with wholemeal flour and shape the dough into a round, flat-ish loaf on it. Dust with a little more flour, slash the top a few times and bake for 30-35 mins until risen, crusty and cooked through – it should sound hollow when you tap the bottom of it.

3 Cool bread to just warm (or leave to cool completely if preparing ahead), then get the cheese ready. Unwrap the cheese and put back into the box. Tie string around the box in case the glue melts in the oven. Drizzle the cheese with walnut oil, season, then put in the oven for 10 mins. Serve with slices of the warm walnut bread and pear.

PER SERVING 966 kJ, protein 35g, carbs 108g, fat 47g, sat fat 14g, fibre 10g, sugar 19g, salt 3.76g



Shallot tarte tatin with goat's cheese

SERVES 4-5 • PREP 40 MINS •

COOK 45 MINS Easy V GF

600g shallots
2 tbsp olive oil
25g butter
4 tbsp balsamic vinegar
2 tbsp demerara or soft light
brown sugar
4 thyme sprigs
375g sheet puff pastry
100g-140g goat's cheese, sliced
into rounds

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Put the shallots into a heatproof bowl and pour over boiling water to cover. Leave for 10 mins, then drain and peel.

2 Heat the oil and butter in a frying pan. Add the shallots and fry gently for 10-15 mins until softened and lightly browned. Stir in the vinegar and sugar with leaves from 2 thyme sprigs for a few mins until caramelised. Turn off heat and season.

3 Tear remaining thyme sprigs into a few pieces and scatter over the base of a 22cm ovenproof shallow pan, cake or tart tin without a loose base. Tip in the shallots with all their sticky juices. Roll out the pastry until it's big enough to cut out a roughly 26cm circle. Lift the pastry circle onto the shallots, then tuck the edges down the inside of the pan. Bake for 25-30 mins until pastry is golden.

4 Leave tart for 5 mins to settle, then turn out of the tin. Dot with rounds of goat's cheese and slice into wedges.

PER SERVING 603 kcals, protein 14g, carbs 39g, fat 45g, sat fat 20g, fibre 3g, sugar 16g, salt 1.56g >>

Onion soup with cheese & herb toasts

SERVES 6 • PREP 40 MINS • COOK 1

HR **Easy**   SOUP ONLY

The secret to a good onion soup is cooking the onions long and slow first – this will give flavour and a deep colour to the finished dish.

25g butter

1 tbsp olive oil

6 onions, thinly sliced

3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

2 tbsp flour

1.3 litres beef stock

Splash of Worcestershire sauce

FOR THE TOASTS

1 baguette, cut into 12-18 thin slices

175g mature cheddar or Stilton,
grated

Small bunch of chives, snipped

½ small bunch parsley, finely
chopped

1 Heat the butter and oil in a large pan and gently cook the onion and garlic until very soft and golden. Increase heat slightly and cook until brown – about 20-40 mins in total.

2 Stir in the flour for 2 mins, then stir in the stock, bring to a simmer, then season with salt and pepper and Worcestershire sauce. Keep warm.

3 Heat the grill and toast the bread on both sides. Meanwhile, mix the grated cheese with the herbs. Sprinkle a little on each slice

and grill to melt. Ladle soup into bowls and float toasts on top.

PER SERVING 317 kcals, protein 16g, carbs 26g, fat 16g, sat fat 9g, fibre 3g, sugar 10g, salt 1.49g **GF**





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Friday finest

LUNCH FOR 6

- Spiced roast side of salmon
- New potato & tamarind salad
- Crunchy lime-drenched salad
- Tomato chutney
- Fresh mint & choc chip ice cream

This Indian-inspired menu is lighter and quicker to cook than a traditional roast. Recipes ROOPA GULATI
Photographs MAJA SMEND



Relaxed cooking makes for laid-back Fridays. This menu, with its gentle spicing, uncomplicated recipes and light flavours can be made ahead.

— Roopa Gulati

Spiced roast side of salmonSERVES 6 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK
20 MINS **Easy** **Heart healthy** **Good for you**

Ready in a jiffy, a side of salmon makes a dramatic main course, and its aromatic honeyed topping takes on a lovely toasted spice flavour as it roasts.

1.5kg side of salmon, skin on
1 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for brushing

½ tsp ground ginger

1 tsp paprika

½ tsp coarsely ground black peppercorns

1 tbsp wholegrain mustard

1 tsp honey

1 lemon, cut into wedges, to serve

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Line a big roasting tin with baking parchment or foil – this helps to prevent the fish from sticking to the tin as it cooks. Brush the salmon skin with oil and place it, skin-side down, on the paper.

2 Mix the ground ginger with the paprika, pepper, mustard, honey and 1 tbsp olive oil. Spread it evenly over the fleshy side of the fish.

3 Roast, uncovered, for about 20 mins until the salmon is cooked through – check by poking a knife into the fillet and making sure the fish flakes easily.

4 Serve directly from the tin, or use a couple of fish slices to carefully lift the salmon onto a big plate. Slice into portions and serve with lemon wedges on the side.

PER SERVING 482 kcals, protein 51g, carbs 2g, fat 30g, sat fat 5g, fibre none, sugar 1g, salt 0.4g >>

New way to
serve salmon



New potato & tamarind salad

SERVES 6 • PREP 15 MINS • COOK 25 MINS **Easy** **V** **Low fat** **Good for you**

Tamarind sauce plays a star role in potato-based snacks sold at market stalls in India. Tamarind pulp, made by soaking dried tamarind in water, will have a stronger flavour than a jar of ready-made paste.

1½ tbsp tamarind pulp or paste
50g golden muscovado sugar
1 tbsp ground cumin
Thumb-sized piece of ginger, chopped
1.2kg new potatoes
3 tbsp natural low-fat yoghurt
4 tbsp chopped coriander

1 To make the dressing, put the tamarind pulp in a small pan, pour over 75ml boiling water and add the sugar, cumin and ginger. Simmer, without a lid, until the dressing thickens and becomes syrupy, about 10-15 mins. It should have a

pleasant tang – add extra sugar if needed.

2 While the tamarind is cooking, bring a large pan of salted water to the boil and add the potatoes. Return to the boil and cook for 15 mins until tender. Drain, then cool slightly before halving them. Transfer to a big mixing bowl and spoon over the dressing, gently stirring to make sure the potatoes are well coated. Drizzle over the yoghurt, scatter over the coriander, and serve warm or at room temperature.

PER SERVING 196 kcals, protein 5g, carbs 42g, fat 1g, sat fat none, fibre 3g, sugar 15g, salt 0.1g

Crunchy lime-drenched salad

SERVES 6 • PREP 15 MINS PLUS STANDING • NO COOK

Easy **V** **Low fat** **Good for you** **1 of 5-a-day**

Juice of 2 limes

2-4 green chillies, deseeded and finely chopped

2 tsp caster sugar
1 large cucumber, diced
Large bunch of spring onions, finely chopped
250g cherry tomatoes, quartered
3 tbsp chopped coriander
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1 To make the dressing, combine the lime juice, green chillies and caster sugar, and leave to one side. Mix the cucumber with the spring onions and cherry tomatoes, then spoon in enough lime dressing to moisten – set aside for about 15 mins.

2 Stir in the coriander, tip the salad into a bowl, and drizzle with oil before serving.

PER SERVING 56 kcals, protein 1g, carbs 4g, fat 4g, sat fat 1g, fibre 1g, sugar 4g, salt none

Tomato chutney

SERVES 6 • PREP 15 MINS • COOK 30 MINS **Easy** **V** **Low fat** **2 of 5-a-day**

3 tbsp vegetable oil
2 tsp brown or black mustard seeds
½ tsp red chilli flakes
8-10 curry leaves, fresh or dried
2 red onions, diced
50g ginger, finely chopped
800g canned chopped tomatoes
75g raisins
3 tbsp caster sugar
100ml vinegar

1 Heat the oil in a medium pan set over a medium heat. Add the mustard seeds followed by the chilli flakes and fresh curry leaves (if you are using dried leaves, add them later with the tomatoes). Fry until they release a warm, nutty aroma, about 30 secs.

2 Add the onions and ginger, put on the lid and cook over a low heat, stirring now and then, for about 10 mins until softened. Stir in the tomatoes, raisins, caster sugar and vinegar, and simmer, uncovered, for about 15 mins until thickened. By now it should have a sweet-sour flavour – add more sugar if you think it needs it. Serve warm or at room temperature.

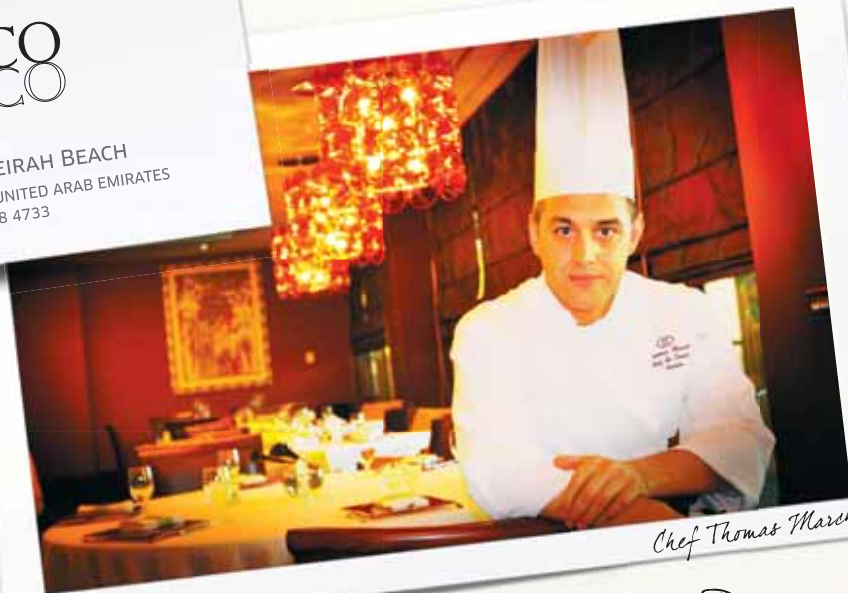
PER SERVING 168 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 26g, fat 6g, sat fat 1g, fibre 2g, sugar 24g, salt 0.2g >>

GET AHEAD

- Make the ice cream up to a month ahead.
- Make the chutney 3-4 days before and store in the fridge in a covered bowl
- The tamarind dressing tastes better if made 1-2 days ahead. Keep it chilled in a jam jar. If it thickens, add a dash of water.
- Mix the spice paste for the salmon the day before and keep in the fridge.

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Fresh mint & choc chip ice creamSERVES 6 • PREP 20 MINS PLUS
OVERNIGHT STANDING AND FREEZING• COOK 10 MINS **A little effort** 

140g dark chocolate
400ml full-fat milk
300ml double cream
1 vanilla pod, split
75g fresh mint leaves with stalks
4 large egg yolks
140g caster sugar
Ice-cream cones, to serve (optional)

1 Put the chocolate in a plastic bag, seal and freeze for at least 30 mins. Bash the frozen chocolate with a rolling pin until it shatters into small chunks inside the bag.

2 Pour the milk and cream into a medium heavy-based pan, then add the vanilla pod, scraping the seeds into the mixture. Heat the creamy milk, stirring occasionally, until almost boiling. Add the mint leaves and stalks, cover with a lid, and leave for 15 mins.

3 Strain the liquid, pressing the mint with a spatula to extract maximum flavour. Discard the leaves and stalks, and scoop out the vanilla pod.

4 Whisk the egg yolks and caster sugar until thick and pale – about 5 mins if you are using an electric whisk.

Return the minty cream to a clean pan and bring back to almost boiling.

5 Pour half the hot liquid onto the egg and sugar mixture, whisking to combine everything before adding the remaining liquid. Return the custard to the rinsed-out pan and cook over a low heat, stirring all the time, until lightly thickened – about 3-4 mins. Take care it doesn't get too hot or it may curdle. Strain the custard into a bowl and leave to cool, stirring occasionally to prevent a skin forming. Chill the custard until really cold – it's a good idea to leave it overnight.

Fabulous make-ahead dessert



6 Churn the custard in an ice-cream machine until frozen. Add the chocolate pieces just before it sets. If you don't have a machine, pour the custard into a chilled container and freeze for 2-3 hrs until the sides become icy. Whisk

thoroughly to break up any crystals, then add the chocolate and freeze until solid. Leave to soften in the fridge for 20-30 mins, then serve in bowls or cones.

PER SERVING 549 kcs, protein 7g, carbs 41g, fat 40g, sat fat 23g, fibre 1g, sugar 41g, salt 0.1g **GF**

Prepare-ahead puddings

Take the stress out of dinner parties by making your dessert days in advance.



Mango, pear & ginger crumble

SERVES 4 • PREP 20 MINS • COOK 35 MINS **Easy**

450g ripe pears, peeled, cored and thickly sliced
1 tbsp muscovado sugar
2 mangoes, peeled, stoned and chunked

1 piece stem ginger, finely chopped
FOR THE TOPPING
175g plain flour
85g butter
85g muscovado sugar
85g pecans very roughly chopped

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Put pears in a pan with the sugar and 4 tbsp water. Cook over a gentle heat for 5 mins, until the pears are just tender. Remove from heat; stir in the mangoes and ginger. Spoon the mix into a shallow 1.75-litre freezerproof baking dish and leave to cool.

2 Make the topping. Rub butter into flour, stir in sugar and pecans. Sprinkle over the fruit, then bake for 30 mins until browned. Serve with cream or vanilla ice cream.

PER SERVING 684 kcals, protein 8g, carbs 95g, fat 33g, sat fat 11g, fibre 9g, sugar 26g, salt 0.45g

◆ MAKE AHEAD

The flavours actually improve if made ahead. Will keep in the fridge for up to 1 week.

◆ **MAKE AHEAD** Wrap the dish in a large freezer bag, or cling film and freeze for up to 1 month. To serve, bake from frozen at 180C/160C fan for 50 mins or until topping is golden.

Dried fruit salad

SERVES 6 • PREP 20 MINS • COOK 10 MINS **Easy** **Superhealthy** **Low fat**

600g good-quality ready-to-eat dried fruits (prunes, apricots, figs, cranberries)

3 tbsp clear honey

1 vanilla pod, split lengthways

1 Earl Grey tea bag

1 tbsp lemon juice

Mascarpone or Greek yoghurt, to serve

1 Tip fruits and 700ml cold water into a large pan. Add honey and vanilla, scraping the seeds from the pod into the pan. Bring to the boil. Stir well, lower heat and simmer for 10 mins until just syrupy.

2 Take the pan off the heat and stir in the tea bag. Leave to infuse for 10 mins.

3 Discard tea bag and vanilla, tip fruits and liquid into a non-metallic bowl and pour on the lemon. Stir; cover and chill until needed.

PER SERVING 192 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 46g, fat 1g, sat fat none, fibre 6g, sugar 6g, salt 0.07g

Tastes even better
if made ahead



Best-ever tiramisu

SERVES 6 • PREP 30 MINS PLUS
CHILLING **Easy**

568ml pot double cream
250g mascarpone
75ml Marsala
5 tbsp golden caster sugar
300ml strong coffee, made with
2 tbsp coffee granules and
300ml boiling water
175g pack sponge fingers
25g chunk dark chocolate
2 tsp cocoa powder

1 Put the cream, mascarpone, Marsala and sugar in a large bowl. Whisk until the cream and mascarpone have completely combined and have the consistency of thickly whipped cream.
2 Get your serving dish ready. Put the coffee into a shallow dish and dip in a couple of sponge fingers at a time, turning for a few secs until they are nicely soaked, but not soggy. Layer these into your dish until you have used half the biscuits, then spread over half of the creamy mix. Using the coarse side of the grater, grate over most of the chocolate. Then repeat the layers (you should use up all the coffee), finishing with the creamy layer. Cover and chill until ready to serve.

PER SERVING 853 kcs, protein 5g, carbs 44g, fat 73g, sat fat 42g, fibre none, sugar 35g, salt 0.25g

◆ MAKE AHEAD

Can be kept in the fridge for up to 2 days. Just before serving, dust with cocoa powder and grate over the remainder of the chocolate.



Simple yet impressive

Pecan toffee meringue with poached pears

SERVES 8-10 • PREP 30 MINS
• COOK 1 HR 10 MINS **Easy**

FOR THE POACHED PEARS

600ml water
6 small, ripe, shapely pears, peeled, quartered and cored
1 cinnamon stick
½ tsp cloves

50g golden caster sugar

FOR THE PECAN AND MERINGUE FILLING

225g golden caster sugar
1½ tsp cornflour
4 large egg whites
1½ tsp vinegar
50g/2oz pecans, roughly chopped
500g Greek yoghurt
4 tbsp caramel sauce (we used Carnation)
Extra toasted pecans (optional)

1 Put the water, pears, spices and sugar in a pan and simmer for 10 mins.
2 Heat oven to 160C/140C fan. Draw a 25cm circle on baking parchment, then put on a baking sheet. Stir 225g sugar and cornflour together in a jug. Whisk

the egg whites until stiff, then whisk in the sugar mix, a tbsp at a time, until thick and glossy.

3 Fold in vinegar and half the nuts, then pile mixture onto the circle, building up the edges to make a 'nest'. Scatter with rest of pecans, then put in oven, turning the temperature down to 150C/130C fan. Bake for 1 hr, then turn oven off and cool inside for 1 hr.


4 Take the pears from the juice, then simmer the juice until it's syrupy and glossy. Return the pears and cool. Stir the yoghurt with the caramel sauce. To serve, pile the filling into the meringue and arrange the pears on top. Scatter with nuts, if using. Hand round the syrup for guests to spoon a little over.

PER SERVING 390 kcs, protein 9g, carbs 51g, fat 14g, sat fat 5g, fibre 2g, sugar 50g, salt 0.26g

◆ **MAKE AHEAD** Keep the meringue in an airtight container for up to 1 week. The pears and sauce will keep in the fridge for 4 days. To freeze, cool, put the meringue into a large, rigid container. Pack the pears in a container or food bag and freeze for up to 6 weeks; the sauce won't freeze.

The London Dairy dessert series

#5 Dark and decadent



A rich dark chocolate tart and the sweet innocence of cookies and cream ice cream make the perfect marriage, as Maxime Le Van, head chef at Kitchen 45, Embassy Dubai, Grosvenor House Dubai, shows us here.

Next month,
look out for the recipe with
Mango Sorbet

Dark chocolate tart

SERVES 4

125g plain flour and extra for dusting
50g caster sugar
20g cocoa powder
2 eggs
85g unsalted butter, diced
100ml milk
2 star anise
180g double cream
80g (70%) dark chocolate, chopped

1 Mix the flour, sugar and cocoa powder and spread on a flat surface. Add 1 egg and mix with your hands. Add butter and knead until it becomes a smooth dough - do not overwork as you don't want the butter to melt. Wrap in cling film and refrigerate for one hour.

2 Bring the milk to a boil and add the star anise. Remove from heat and cover with cling film before setting aside for 10 mins.

3 Make a chocolate ganache by first placing the chocolate in a mixing bowl. Bring the cream to a boil, and cool for a minute, then pour over the chocolate, while mixing with a spatula. Stir until the chocolate has melted. Strain the milk and add to the chocolate. Beat an egg and add to the mix, constantly stirring to mix thoroughly. Place in an airtight container and refrigerate for an hour.

4 Preheat oven to 150C. Roll the tart dough to 2mm, dusting lightly with flour. Cut into 4 discs about 5cm larger than the diameter of your tart pans, and lay the discs into individual tart pans, pressing down to fit tightly. Place loosely a cling film sheet on top of each tart and fill with baking beans up to the top. Close the film to form a bag on top of the tart; place in the fridge for another 30 mins and then bake for 10 mins. Remove the bag of beans, and with a sharp knife, cut the excess dough around the rim of the pans and allow to cool.

5 Spoon the chocolate ganache onto each tart, and bake again for 7 mins. Switch off the heat and open the oven door slightly to cool down. Serve with a scoop of ice cream, piece of chocolate or honey comb, and a dusting of icing sugar.

MEET THE CHEF



French national, chef Maxime Le Van, grew up in Nice, and took his first step into a professional kitchen when he enrolled himself at culinary school in Menton, France, at the age of 15. He has since worked in Monte Carlo, Nice, St. Tropez and Michelin-star kitchens in London such as Club Gascon, where he became the head chef at the age of 23. He made his way to Dubai in 2012, and is now the head chef at Kitchen 45, Embassy Dubai.

CHEF'S TIP:

"If you have difficulties rolling down the dough, place it in between two sheets of greaseproof paper and set in the fridge for a couple of minutes – it will be easier to handle."

Two other ways to enjoy London Dairy's Cookies and Cream ice cream:



Add pieces of honey comb and a drizzle of honey to a scoop.



Serve with chocolate fondant or warm chocolate cake.



Grosvenor House Dubai



To see a step-by-step video for this recipe, visit youtube.com/bbcgoodfoodme or facebook.com/LondonDairy, or you could simply scan this QR code with your smartphone.



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Instant style updates for your kitchen

Smart, simple ways to give your kitchen a fresh new look without breaking the bank. By Nicola Monteath.



1 Become a basket case!

Place kitchen towels and supplies into a wicker basket, and keep it in the cabinet under the kitchen sink. They not only look great, but are also useful for keeping things organised and within reach.

2

Go green

Alison Laws, International operations manager at Lakeland, says, "It's a great idea to hang plant pots in bare ceiling corners to give a lived-in feeling to a plain kitchen." Plants and flowers not only bring nature in, but add colour and aroma to your kitchen.

3 Give it a new lick of paint

Cupboards and doors can become dull over time, but there's nothing that a coat of paint can't spruce up. "When painting doors, take off the hinges and place the door flat on the floor, before painting. This produces a more professional finish," says Lyndall Fernie, Interior design tutor at Chelsea College of Art and Design.

4 Refurbish old furniture

Is your old dresser not in need anymore? Paint it, to suit your kitchen colour scheme, and use it as a kitchen island. Or you could strip off the colour and varnish it, to give it a rustic look. A kitchen island is great for chopping, quick breakfasts, and for the kids to sit down to do their homework over an after-school snack. >>





5 Create space

"Add extra counter and storage-space to your kitchen, with a portable trolley that has two or more adjustable shelves, and grooves along the sides – to keep bottles in place," says James McGowan, Regional brand communications manager at Ikea. The trolley can store anything from olive oil and vinegar bottles, to baskets of onions and potatoes, which would typically take up counter or cabinet space.



6 Shine a light

Most kitchens are fitted with regular white lights, but adding some ambient light can make a big difference. "Decide which area in the kitchen you want the focal point to be, and then light up that area with ceiling or table lamps. This will help draw your eye to the area that you want people's attention to be drawn to," says Lyndall. Pendant lamps over the kitchen island and a great option for creating a cosy feel.



7 Get picture-perfect

Photo frames are not just for your living room or bedroom. "Add an artsy element to your kitchen walls by putting up framed vintage recipe sheets, food photos, or even kitchen wall art," says Ann Hayward, Senior Visual Merchandising manager at Home Centre.

8

Clear out the clutter

If you have extra space above the windows in your kitchen, add a storage cabinet or shelving unit overhead, to store away crockery and pots and pans neatly. This will keep clutter away from kitchen counters, and keep you from cramming all your beautiful sets into cabinets.

9 Accessorise!

Adding a few colourful accessories to counter tops, or simply replacing old accessories can immediately make your kitchen a more stylish, functional space. "A few strategically placed accessories can give you a whole new look. Replace key accessories like toaster covers, dish towels, canister sets, salt and pepper shakers and pot holders with new ones in bright colours," says Alison.

10

Freshen up the background

Give your kitchen a pop of colour and texture by adding a splash-back. "Coloured glass splash-backs are fashionable and the reflective quality brings a sparkle to your kitchen. They also don't have grout lines which collect dirt. Alternatively small mosaics or patterned tiles can add texture and colour as well," says Lyndall.

11

Spruce up your walls

Change the colour scheme of your kitchen with wallpaper. Vinyl wallpapers are great as they can be wiped down easily – something which is essential for a kitchen, with all the oil and grime that is inevitable. Roula Recape, Marketing manager of Ace Hardware, suggests purchasing wallpaper that can be painted over – just in case you want to change the colour next season!



12 Scratch the surface

Worktops instantly modify the look of the kitchen, and beautify a space while providing functionality. If you are looking at renovating your kitchen, Lyndall suggests, “replace existing worktops with a good quality stone, composite or granite to create a totally new look. Composite worktops are available in a wide range of colours and finishes, are hard wearing, and don’t have the natural fault lines that marble or stone worktops have.”


13 Take it to the top!

We tend to forget about our ceilings, most times, but it is a great focal point for a minor kitchen update. “Fix wooden boards to the ceiling to enhance the quality of space. These boards can be fixed onto an existing roof or false ceiling, and can further be fitted with spotlights, cove lighting or chandeliers, to give the kitchen a cosy feel. You can choose from different finishes, to suit your kitchen’s style,” says Abdullah Kunhi, Principal architect at design firm AKDesigno.

14 Be lazy!

A lazy susan isn’t just useful for the dining table. Add efficiency to your kitchen, by keeping one in hard-to-reach corners for easy-access storage. “You can place this convenient rotating tray in just about any cabinet or corner. It eliminates the need to search through various stacked containers hidden at the back, and avoids mess,” says Alison.

15 Use flower power

“Always remember to be creative and make the most of what you have to hand in your kitchen, to decorate,” says Florian Bausch, Global Head of Product Management, Tableware, at Villeroy & Boch. Instead of buying new vases, try using pretty glasses to display floral bouquets, or even a small sprig of blooms, he suggests. This will add colour and a fresh seasonal twist to your décor. 





MY KITCHEN

Loyd Grossman

TV presenter Loyd Grossman shows Holly Brooke-Smith around his west London kitchen.
Photographs GEOFF WILKINSON

Having started his long career in food as a restaurant critic, Loyd Grossman made his TV debut in 1987 with 'Through the Keyhole'. In 1990 he became the face of BBC's MasterChef and, together with guest chefs, "deliberated, cogitated and digested" the contestants' offerings for ten years. He is back on TV screens this year as one of the judges on 'Food, Glorious Food!'.

What did you start with?

The space was divided in two by an island, but I just wanted to have a single space where you could eat, sit and watch television. The whole room was basically gutted so that it was just an empty space.

What were you aiming for?

I find that when you have lots of cupboards, it

makes the space even smaller. Also, I don't like hiding stuff behind cabinet doors. It was either going to be glass-fronted cupboards or the open shelving. It does mean being very tidy, but it has that lovely feeling of a delicatessen – that you're surrounded by products.

So what is on show?

Well, I will sometimes buy something because it's



Loyd likes being able to see all his ingredients at a glance



A boiling-water tap makes a speedy cup of tea



A sharp mandolin is the latest addition to his kitchen



Pantry ingredients can make for great display objects



Loyd has an eclectic collection of vintage bowls, teapots and mugs

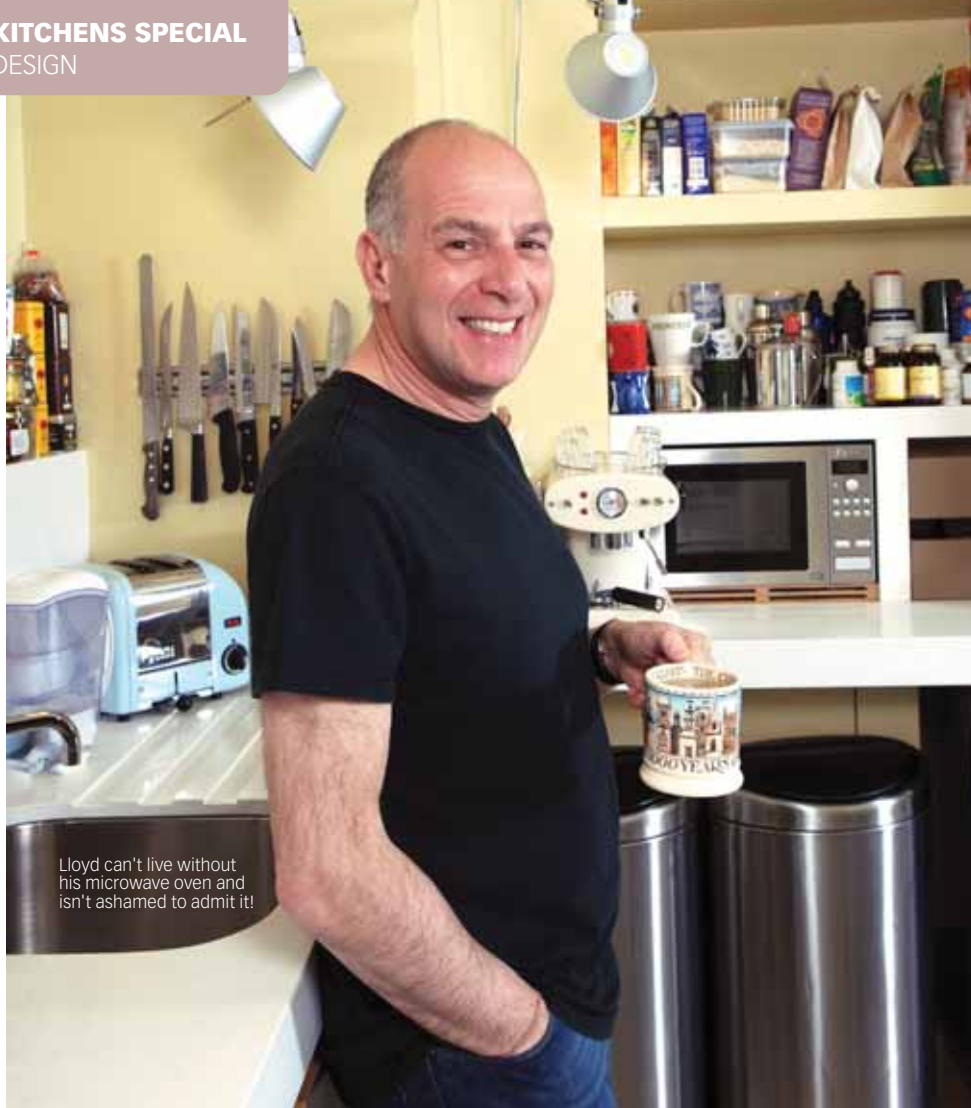
in a fabulous tin or a great-looking bag, but everything in here has a real use. I like ingredients. I like to have lots of interesting stuff around me – when you can see it all, you get more ideas about what to use.

Nothing is ever in the back of a cupboard for years and years. Given that food is about abundance, sharing and generosity, I like to be surrounded by plenty of things.

Is there enough storage?

I don't have a lot of equipment. I have enough knives and saucepans, and I don't know what else you need, really.

I don't go in for the more obscure gadgets – although I bought a nice, sharp ceramic mandolin recently, which is really great. The problem now is that I've started thinking, 'What can I make that involves lots of slicing', because it's such fun. >>




Lloyd can't live without his microwave oven and isn't ashamed to admit it!

It's French oak from an old barn, so it has a lovely feel to it. Because the rest of the kitchen is quite modern, it provides a nice contrast. I think kitchen tables are so important.

What do you cook on?

The oven is a Gaggenau, which I like because it is very wide. I can put two roasting tins in side by side, which seems easier than having one under the other. For a domestic oven, it's fairly heavy-duty. And I have to have gas hobs.

I can see why people like induction, but because I like grilling things and cooking Chinese food, I've got to have gas. You can get pans hot really quickly and I like to see the flame.

I also didn't want an extractor hood, given that the space is relatively small, so there is a small extractor fan mounted on the wall instead. 

LOYD'S TOP TIPS

- A microwave is absolutely vital. How else do you defrost petits pois? The really great thing in microwaves is ice cream – just put it in for 10 seconds and it's perfect.
- My fridge-freezer makes ice. As an American, I put ice in everything and I don't like fiddling around with ice trays.
- I like having framed pictures in here. It's hard to have pictures in kitchens – it's not really the right environment because it's steamy and oily.
- My boiling hot water tap is absolutely great for a really quick cup of tea.
- Having open shelves means you have to be tidy, and also able to dust!

Where did you find the lights?

I knew about the Italian desk light range called Tolomeo and I just had a feeling that I'd seen them somewhere mounted on a wall. They're great lamps, really easy to use and can be angled anywhere.

And the table?

I designed the table. I chose the thickness of the top and the type of leg. The chairs came afterwards – I just wanted a big, indestructible table that doesn't require any attention.

GET THE LOOK



Add subtle lighting to your kitchen by using tealights or pillar candles. Big hurricane lamp, Dhs749, at The One.

It's worth investing in a sturdy pan, like this Stainless steel 24cm lidded stockpot, Dhs319 at Lakeland.



This Forsa nickel-plated desk lamp is stylish and useful in the kitchen. Dhs95 at Ikea.



Keep fresh lemons on the kitchen table like Lloyd does, to add a burst of colour. Wooden bowl, Dhs149, at Homes r Us.

A stainless steel bin gives the kitchen a sleek look. Dhs39, at Ace Hardware.



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A top-down view of a round wooden cutting board. On the board are several kitchen items: a large chef's knife with a black handle, a smaller paring knife, and a pair of kitchen shears, all with black handles. There is a wedge of blue cheese with a knife stuck into it, several figs (some whole, some sliced), and a small white card with sliced cherry tomatoes. In the background, a wooden storage jar with a metal clasp and a wooden knife block are partially visible.

Staycations start with savoury bites and natural cookware.

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Give your kitchen an eco makeover

Nicola Monteath asks the experts for simple, unique ways to have a cleaner, greener kitchen.



So you're buying local produce, checking food labels thoroughly, and choosing organic at the supermarket aisles – your kitchen is already greener than most. But, have you thought about how the chemical nasties from your washing up liquid might be undoing any good that organic salad might be giving you? Going green in the kitchen is not only beneficial for your health, but for the environment and your wallets too! And it doesn't have to involve expensive gadgets or massive changes – a few simple swaps and habit changes are all it takes to make your kitchen a more eco-friendly space.

The key ways to practice being eco-friendly are to use natural products, re-use, reduce, re-cycle, conserve energy, reduce wastage, and use resources wisely. "A green kitchen is built around responsible thinking," says Gundeep Singh, chief executive officer of sustainable solutions store, The Change Initiative.

Tolga Soytekin, founder of Eco-green, a locally-based manufacturer of eco-friendly home cleaning products and services, adds, "Going green is important, especially in the kitchen, as it is a place in your home where you entertain, cook and relax."

A green infrastructure in the kitchen allows you to effectively become more eco-friendly. But, more importantly, implementing good habits as part of your everyday lifestyle is essential. "It has to become second nature," says Tolga. "It's easy to forget to make green choices when shopping, especially if you are accustomed to buying a particular product for years. Make sure everyone in your household is aware about the importance of going green, and gets involved in the practice."

NATURAL REMEDIES

Chemical cleaning products make leave your countertops looking squeaky clean, but they contain compounds that are toxic, both for health and the environment – as the fumes released by some of them contributes to air pollution. Chemicals, although invisible, can have a damaging effect on our health, as they build up in our system.

"Excessive use of detergents and washing liquids are toxic, as the chemicals in them can get transferred into our bodies. Without knowing, we ingest harmful chemicals daily, as we regularly touch various surfaces, and put those same hands on our skin or into our mouths too," says Gundeep.

Not just through touch or inhalation, the indirect ways in which these chemicals make their way into our bodies can be mind-boggling. For example, did you know that the water from our dishwashing goes into the drainage system, and is sometimes released into the sea? Conventional >>

dishwashing products contain chemicals that break down in the sea – whereas biodegradable products don't – which then harm marine life. A fish from that very sea could then be caught and put on your plate – meaning you have just ingested some chemicals that were put into the sea by you in the first place.

These chemicals pose a threat to health – especially for babies and toddlers – as they weaken the immune system and can contribute to various ailments, including those related to heart health and the respiratory system.

All-natural cleaning products are non-toxic, eco-friendly and an essential way to going green. "By replacing cleaning products with eco-friendly versions, whether natural products or home remedies, you are one step closer to creating a green kitchen. A great variety of eco-friendly dish washing liquids and floor-cleaning products are available in stores nowadays.

Swap cleaning products that have high levels of ammonia, bleach, chloride and chlorine, for eco-friendly products that are phosphate-free, have some form of citric acid and contain ingredients such as coconut fatty acids and natural dyes.

You could also go a step further and make your own at home, with readily available ingredients such as lemon, baking soda, vinegar and tea tree oil. To effectively sanitise kitchen surfaces, glass counters and windows, Gundeep suggests mixing half parts of white vinegar and lemon juice. "The mild acid in the vinegar and citric acid from the lemon create a formula that kills all germs," he says.

Tolga's top tip, an age-old trick he inherited from his grandmother, is to rub flour or baking soda on taps, stainless steel appliances, and counters, and wipe it down with a damp cloth, before buffing. This removes limescale and keeps stainless steel surfaces germ-free and polished.

When mopping floors, simply add lemon juice or tea tree oil to water, as a safe alternative to store-bought cleaning liquids – this is especially important when you have babies and toddlers, as they are always putting the same hands they've been crawling all over the floor with, into their mouths!

THE THREE RS

The importance of the re-use, reduce, recycle mantra cannot be over-emphasised. Even if we know about it, most of us still don't remember to apply it in our lives or households. "The key to managing waste is to create less wastage to begin with. Cook the right portions, and pack leftovers for lunch the next day," says Gundeep. "Also, buy PET bottles and recyclable packaged products that can be disposed into recycling bins."



You can also install different bins in your house, one for recycling, one for general garbage, and one for composting. "Composting is easy to do, and not to mention, make for great fertiliser for your garden. Make sure to include dry matter such as egg shells and paper rolls to the composting bin, as otherwise the wet matter will rot. And always use a bin in the size that is suitable for your home," says Tolga.

Other simple habits you can start practicing include bringing a reusable tote bag to the supermarket, switching off the lights in the kitchen, and recycling plastic and cans. You can get the whole family involved in going green, particularly the kids, by turning it into a fun game where they get rewarded with treats every time they remember to put these good habits into practice.

ENERGY SAVING SOLUTIONS

Interested in knowing how to reduce your energy bills? Begin with preventing yourself from opening the refrigerator several times. "Invest in a refrigerator that has multiple doors; this way the internal temperature of the fridge doesn't change, whenever it is opened," says Gundeep. Also, unplug and switch off appliances when not in use, to reduce energy consumption and radiation emitted in your home.

The lighting in your kitchen sets the ambiance, so switch regular lighting for LED lights. "LED lights last for 50,000 hours and save energy by 95 per cent, compared to regular lighting fixtures that houses are fitted with," says Gundeep. While it might require a small investment initially, in the long-term, you will enjoy a positive impact on electricity bills. "LED lights not only consume less energy but also produce lesser heat, which means there may no longer be a need for a fan or air-conditioning in the kitchen," says Tolga. "If you have windows in your kitchen allowing natural light in, make sure to screen them, so it allows light to come through while preventing heat – this also reduces the need for cooling in the kitchen."


Another great energy-saving idea is investing in



a nozzle for taps (available from online store ecocamel.me), which Tolga highly recommends, as it gushes water out of the tap in full flow – even when it isn't turned on to its full capacity.

If you have a gas stove in your kitchen, Gundeep suggests getting a small table-top induction hob, which is 20 per cent more efficient than gas. Use it to heat water, instead of using the gas, and warm up dishes, as opposed to using a microwave – which produces radiation.

A dishwasher is also a great investment as it consumes far less water than hand-washing dishes. When using a dishwasher, follow these eco tips from Gundeep – make sure you have full load, as the half load setting uses more than energy; stack the dishes properly; and use the eco-friendly setting if your dishwasher has one.

Whether it's natural products, energy-efficient gadgets, or simply being conscious of waste, going green in the kitchen is simple. Get started on your eco lifestyle, and you and your family will reap lifelong benefits. 

FABULOUSLY FRESH

Try these homemade eco-friendly air fresheners recommended by Tolga:

- Pierce cloves into a whole unpeeled orange, from top to bottom, and wrap a ribbon around it. Hang this near a fruit basket to prevent fruit flies, or the pantry to keep it smelling fresh.
- Place used coffee grinds at the bottom of your bin to prevent it from smelling.
- Reuse a takeaway plastic box, by piercing holes into the lid, and filling it with baking powder and lemon rinds. This non-toxic air-freshener can be kept in the fridge to dissipate odours.
- Create a herb bouquet and place in your fridge or pantry to give it a fresh herb garden aroma.



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Lessons for a Green Kitchen

Energy efficiency is becoming an ever-increasing concern for everyone. Pablo Perez, Marketing Manager of Teka UAE takes us on a tour of the kitchen to share tips on conserving energy and water, appliance by appliance.



"The kitchen is a very good starting point when it comes to making changes in terms of domestic energy consumption. In an average kitchen there are more than ten appliances working, some of them 24/7. Small changes in your choices can make a big difference to your bill, and to the planet," says Pablo Perez, Marketing Manager of Teka UAE. "Energy expenditure in any appliance is unavoidable – the key is not only energy reduction, it is efficiency, to do what you need to do while expending the minimum energy."

One of the easiest ways to make a responsible choice is to simply follow the 'Energy Label' coding, which is now applied to most electrical home appliances. The label shows the 'energy rate' or 'energy class' of each product, and is attached by independent authorities after factory testing based on strict standards and procedures. The highest rating is A, A+ or A++, so a product labelled as such is the most energy-efficient.

Here are some easy to follow eco tips for appliances regularly used in a kitchen, as well as product recommendations from Teka for each:

THE OVEN

Try this> Use glass or ceramic bakeware for use in the oven, they are the most efficient and require lower temperatures for cooking. Another great way to save energy is to turn the oven off ten minutes before the recommended cooking time – the oven keeps the same temperature for that time, so the food will continue to cook.

Buy this> "The more precise your oven is, the most efficient it is," says Pablo. "Teka ovens feature cutting-edge features like direct access menus, cooking functions, thermal probe cooking



or electronic temperature control function allow the oven to work for exactly as long as it is required, and heats only what is necessary. Our latest green technology is Hydroclean, the one and only ecological cleaning system which is based on a special enamel on the oven's cavity and trays. All you need is let your oven cool down, pour a glass of water inside and select the Hydroclean option – you will have a clean oven in twenty-four minutes with hardly any effort, just by creating steam at very low energy consumption."

THE MICROWAVE

Try this> It is a well-known fact that a microwave uses far less energy than a conventional oven, so it is a good idea to use it for cooking – where possible – to help conserve energy. When heating your food, transfer it from the cold boxes into a serving plate and spread, it will heat faster and more homogeneously.

Buy this> Teka microwaves have three direct access menus or cooking menus. Thanks to these

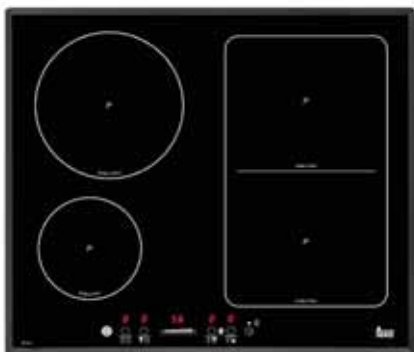
options, different power memories and heating times can be selected, which means you will get the same result every time you are repeating your favourite recipes – eliminating the need to overheat, losing time and energy.

Additionally, Teka built-in microwaves have two microwave inputs both above and below the magnetron aerial or antenna. This system spreads the heat inside the food more evenly since they emit the microwaves from two different points. It complements the action of the turntable and minimises cold zones. Some models also come with a ceramic base that replaces the traditional rotary turntable, providing a more homogeneous distribution of the waves, providing optimum cooking conditions in less time.



THE HOB

Try this> If you have a choice, choose an induction hob over a gas oven or electric hob – they save an extra 33 per cent energy. For example, to boil a litre of water you will spend 12 minutes on your gas hob, nine on a ceramic hob and less than eight in an induction hob. Induction hobs come with an intelligent system, which



automatically recognises the pan size, providing only the energy needed. As well, if the pot or pan is not touching the hob surface, there is no energy expenditure; it remains on 'stand by' mode.

If you don't have an induction cooker, you can still do your bit by cooking food in large batches – which can be frozen later; cutting up ingredients in smaller pieces for faster cooking; and keeping pots and pans covered to reduce heat loss.

Buy this> Induction hobs were prohibitively expensive for home kitchens in the past, but not any more. Teka offers a range of induction hobs, from a very accessible entry-level product to the highest standards.



THE COOKER HOOD

Try this> Your cooker hood should match the size of your hob – if you have a 30cm cooking hob, you don't need a 120cm cooker hood. Similarly, the power of the hood should be in proportion to the size of your kitchen – if you have a ten square metre kitchen, you don't require same power in your hood than if you had a 40 square metre kitchen. It is important to follow the minimum distance between the hob and the hood suggested in the instruction manual, and to connect the hood around three minutes before cooking and disconnect it three minutes later – this way, you will generate a continuous airflow.

Buy this> Teka's range of domestic cooker hoods fully covers island, wall wing and traditional options with all the possibilities of size, design and power extraction.

THE REFRIGERATOR

Try this> This is the number one kitchen appliance you need to consider for energy efficiency, as it is always connected. When using the refrigerator, take care not to open and close it too many times. It is also important to keep it fairly full, because there will be less air to cool. But be careful not to over-fill as that can block air-flow vents. Another key thing to remember is not to put hot food inside the fridge, the heat released actually makes the compressor work harder.

Buy this> Firmly committed to the environment, Teka refrigerators are 100 per cent free of CFC and comply with all international regulations, with most of them being in the A+ energy rating class. Their many advanced features include the 'Fuzzy Logic' or 'Eco-Fuzzy' system, which provides a constant and precise automatic



regulation of the temperature through independent sensors, which are distributed throughout the refrigerator. Another innovative feature is the 'Eco' or 'Vacation' function – this is an energy saving mode in which the consumption of electricity is adjusted to a minimum without disconnecting the appliance – perfect for the holiday months!

THE DISHWASHER

Try this> Did you know that using a dishwasher can save more than 30 litres of hot water per day in comparison with hand washing? When using a dishwasher, always try and run it at full load, or when required, opt for a half-load programme. Also opt for the air-dry function if your dishwasher has one; if not, you can simply turn it off after the rinse cycle, and open it slightly to let air in.

Buy this> The new generation of Teka dishwashers comes with state of the art technology such as the AutoProgram system.

Depending on the dirt present on the crockery, the system chooses the programme, temperature, wash cycles and the amount of water required in order to obtain a perfect result with the lowest possible consumption of energy and water. The Bio or Eco program is ideal when the baskets are not completely full or when the plates are not too dirty – thanks to an infrared sensor, Teka dishwashers automatically control the input of water depending on the load's level of dirtiness.



THE WASHING MACHINE

Try this> Follow the simple practice of only running the machine when it is full, and try and stick to cold wash cycles, or temperatures of 30C, when possible, for energy saving. Also, opt for air-drying over tumble drying.

Buy this> The new Teka washing machines combine systems that minimise the consumption of water and energy with higher precision and washing efficiency. With a special weight sensor in the tub, Teka washing machines adjust water, energy consumption automatically, in accordance with the quantity of clothes. Teka's electronic washing management, the Fuzzy Logic system, manages all washing processes, resulting in a more precise wash.





MY KITCHEN

Lulu Grimes

Food editor Lulu Grimes shows Holly Brooke-Smith around her bold, bright and functional kitchen.

Photographs GEOFF WILKINSON



Lulu Grimes, Deputy editor of Olive magazine and former Food Director of BBC Good Food UK, trained at Leiths School of Food and Wine. She has edited many books and travelled the world researching food publications.

She lives in East London with her husband, John, and six-year-old son, Oliver. The family extended their Georgian home last year to create an open-plan kitchen and upstairs room for Oliver.

What sort of kitchen did you grow up with?

I lived in Assam, India, when I was very little and the kitchen was not one you went into, because

we had a cook. I remember that it had a wood-burning stove and we had a soda maker and old-fashioned glass bottles with marble stoppers. The first kitchen I remember clearly is the one we had when we moved to London – I was about ten. It was very modern for the time, big and open with a dining table in the middle.

What were you aiming for?

I knew that I wanted red and a concrete surface. It's a big room, so it needed a bright colour – too much white would have looked like a hospital. I also knew I didn't want to have an oven that you have to bend over to use, or a cooker hood in the



Red pendant lights punctuate the white and add colour. The under-shelf strip lighting throw lots of light onto the work surfaces



Lulu included her in-laws' cabinet in her new kitchen design



Knives are kept close to hand in bright red knife blocks



The internal window connects the kitchen and living room, so Lulu's son Oliver can play next door while she cooks

middle of the room.

I looked at several hobs, especially zoneless ones, but they were beyond my budget. For the moment, I've got a five-ring gas burner, but ideally I'd have two gas rings and a zoneless induction hob.

It's never been about spending a huge amount of money though; the main thing was space. The way it looks is entirely down to the architect Gort Scott, whom we found through the Royal Institute of Architects.

Why did you choose concrete?

I wanted an inexpensive, functional surface that was a complete contrast to the shiny units. In my experience wood doesn't do well around sink areas, and stainless steel and marble both need constant care.

The concrete has so far been very forgiving, and I like the fact you can see the odd tiny pebble showing though. It's also nice and cool for pastry! >>



Lulu spends lots of time in her kitchen creating and testing recipes – often with the radio for company



This magnetic measuring spoon sticks to your oven or fridge, so it's always handy



Lulu finds a blackboard sticker useful for notes

LULU'S TIPS

- The temptation is to go really modern in a kitchen like this, but we still held on to some of the old stuff, like the side cabinet from my husband's parents.
- I have a wooden floor – it makes such a difference if you are standing on it all day. A really hard floor becomes painful after a while. My mum always said that the tiles in her restaurant kitchen were the death of her legs.
- Having an architect gives you a great finish, as you pay for professional knowledge and craftsmanship.
- The one thing I altered from the architect's original plan was the cupboard handle choice. I knew I needed them to be big enough to hang my tea towels on.

What were your priorities?

Being able to fit what I need is really important for me. I need a fridge that is big enough inside, not one that necessarily looks good from the outside. I'm the kind of person who will go around the oven section of a home store with a roasting tin, making absolutely sure I'm not buying something that's too small. It's all a matter of choice.

How do you use the space?

The window from the kitchen to the living room is really useful. Now I can be working in the kitchen and see through to Oliver, without having to wait for a yelp to know that something has gone wrong!

What are you most pleased with?


The amount of workspace I have is great. Our old cutlery drawers were much smaller

and the new ones fit everything in much more easily. I like deep drawers for kitchen storage as, unlike a cupboard, you can see everything at the back. We've designed the space around what we have, rather than the other way around. And I love the rotisserie function on my De Dietrich oven, which is brilliant for roasting a chicken or duck.

Any more plans?

Kitchens evolve, so to say 'this will last X amount of years' is unrealistic. What happens if new technology means that we all begin to cook in a different way, or if the price of fuel means we need to change the appliances we use?

Has it changed the way you cook?

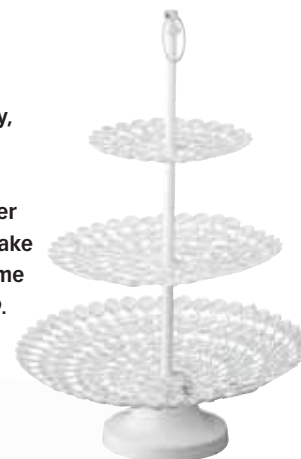
It actually hasn't made any difference to the amount I cook – I spend a lot of time in the kitchen and am quite happy on my own with the radio on. If Oliver is painting or people come around, it just means that now I can carry on with what I'm doing. To be honest, I'd be in here no matter how it looked! 

GET THE LOOK



Make like Lulu and stash your cookies on the kitchen counter, in these Oxo good grips pop cookie jar. Dhs99, at Lakeland.

Show off your bakes on pretty, eclectic cake stands such as this Serine 3-tier wrought iron cake stand from Home Centre. Dhs129.



Add an exotic touch with these gorgeous glasses, Dhs180 for a six piece set, from Comptoir 102.

Keeping your accessories handy on the countertop is easy when they look as good as this Granite pestle and mortar. Dhs115, at Lakeland.



Add extra storage space to a kitchen with this Eureka sideboard. Dhs5,995, at The One.



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Jamie Oliver

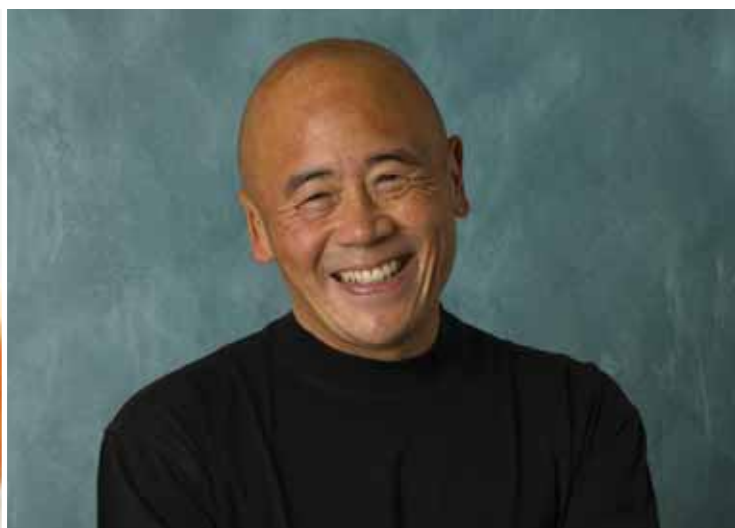
PHILIPS

Jamie Oliver



Gourmet Lifestyle

Travel, global cuisines, health, interviews, kitchens and more



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10 SUPERFOODS EVERYONE NEEDS

Bursting with colour and flavour, these fruit and veg are also packed with goodness, says Barbara Baker.

APRICOTS A great source of vitamin A – vital for good eyesight – but also a very good source of fibre. Apricots can also help to improve your mood – their tryptophan content is converted to serotonin (the body's 'happy hormone').



SPINACH With a reputation for containing a wide range of phytonutrients with anti-cancer properties, spinach also contains vitamin K which will help to keep bones strong. It's also a fat-free source of iron.



WATERMELON One of the most delicious thirst-quenchers on a summer's day as it's 92 per cent water. The magnesium content can improve your mood and also help lung function as magnesium-rich foods are particularly good for asthmatics. You can also roast the seeds to make a tasty snack.

LETTUCE A great source of vitamin C and beta-carotene, which work together to prevent the cholesterol build up in artery walls that causes heart disease and stroke. Lettuce is heart-healthy in other ways – its fibre helps to lower cholesterol, and its potassium helps to lower high blood pressure. Interestingly, the darker the leaves, the more nutritious the lettuce – Romaine has five times more vitamin C than iceberg, and fresh lettuce has a higher nutritional content than bagged salad.



STRAWBERRIES A great source of vitamin C, vitamin K (good for bones and teeth) and fibre, and also anti-cancer compounds that may slow the growth of cancer cells or activate the body's natural defences. One study found that people who eat the most strawberries are three times less likely to develop cancer than those who eat few or none. Vitamin C-rich fruits are also known to help relieve asthma.

TOMATOES A great source of vitamin C, tomatoes are best known for their high lycopene content, a carotenoid that can help to fight breast, colorectal, endometrial, lung and prostate cancers. They also contain biotin, which improves energy levels and gives you glowing skin.



RED PEPPERS An excellent source of immune-boosting vitamin C and lycopene, red peppers also contain vitamin B6 and folic acid which help to reduce the body's levels of homocysteine, which causes damage to blood vessels – giving you greater protection against heart attack and stroke.





BASIL Studies have shown that basil has anti-bacterial properties, and also contains a substance that works in the same way as over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medications, such as aspirin and ibuprofen. This suggests eating lots of basil may play a part in giving relief to inflammatory health problems, such as rheumatoid arthritis.

BLUEBERRIES They're rich in important antioxidants thought to neutralise the free radical damage that can lead to major illnesses and diseases, including cataracts, glaucoma, heart disease and cancer. There is currently some debate as to whether 'free radicals' are as bad as we thought, but most antioxidant-rich foods are high in a range of beneficial nutrients so it's important to keep up your five-a-day. Studies also show that blueberries could help to improve brainpower and learning, and, cystitis sufferers take note, they contain the same compounds found in cranberries that keep the urinary tract healthy. It's important to note, blueberries contain oxalates, naturally-occurring substances that may interfere with the absorption of calcium, so avoid eating them within three hours of eating high calcium food (such as cheese or milk) or taking calcium supplements.



CHERRIES There's growing interest in the power of cherries to relieve the pain of arthritis and gout. Research suggests that they may also lower the risk of cancer and heart disease. One study has shown that cherries contain at least 17 different antioxidants. They're a great source of melatonin – a hormone that regulates sleep patterns – so they may also aid a good night's sleep. **GF**

IS SEASONAL THE BEST?

What with strawberries on the shelves in January, and tomatoes available all year, in this part of the world, unseasonal fruit is all around us. But does it taste as good? And is it as nutritious? Some research suggests that seasonal veg has a higher vitamin and mineral content – and we think it tastes much better, too.

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Made in China!

Farah Sawaf met up with Ken Hom of internationally renowned TV series, 'Ken Hom's Chinese Cookery' fame, and came back blown away by his humility.

As one of the world's most influential and admired chefs, Ken Hom has been something of an ambassador of Chinese cuisine to the world. A bestselling author and TV show host, Hom's *Chinese Cookery* remains a staple with millions of household libraries, having been printed in over 14 languages – including an Arabic title that was published in 2012 – and is still in print, since its first run in 1984. And that's just one of over 20 he's penned. 'Exploring China: A Culinary Adventure' is his most recent BBC TV Series, accompanied by a new cookbook

containing one hundred recipes from the journey. Some of his other popular books include *Foolproof Chinese Cookery* and *Complete Chinese cookbook*. He also recently presented the documentary 'The Noodle Road'.

What Ken has probably gained international recognition for, amongst the masses, is his line of cookware sold throughout the world since 1986, which he has designed to combine both practicality and ease of use for even the most casual of chefs.

Born and bred in the US, Ken moved to Europe

after being scouted for a BBC TV show in 1984, and is currently based in southwest France, but spends a lot of his time travelling. Ken was awarded an OBE in 2009 for 'his services to the culinary arts'.

With a constant focus on healthy cooking, Ken can be credited with demystifying authentic Chinese cuisine for non-Chinese, helping bring its true essence alive through his books, TV shows, products, and consultancies with different restaurants and brands around the world. His latest endeavour is in Rio de Janeiro, where he has been acting as food consultant for a new restaurant slated to open later this year.

However, when you meet this charming and incredibly humble man who is committed to charity – he has been a global ambassador for Action Against Hunger since 2008 – you wouldn't be able to tell his is an international celebrity. He offers us a window into his life.

Did you always know that cooking was a career you wanted to dedicate yourself to?

I first started cooking as an after-school job at the age of eleven when I joined my uncle's Chinese restaurant in Chicago. Working in a Chinese kitchen was all very natural to me, given that I had spent a substantial portion of my eleven short years observing genuine talent – my family – put together meals for us on a daily basis. As such, the interest I had in what was initially a part-time job evolved into a bona fide passion, and ultimately took over my life. This first step into a professional kitchen gave me the foundation I needed and as I grew up, I used this experience to help pay for my university fees. My big break came about when BBC was looking for a Chinese chef and, following some kind recommendations from other chefs, I seemed to fit the profile they were looking for.

There is a misconception on Chinese cuisine – that all dishes have the same flavours and are generally unhealthy. Your thoughts?

First of all, I need to emphasise the fact that Chinese cuisine is not typically fried! Fried dishes only entered the Chinese culinary vernacular in order to open up to non-Chinese tastebuds. Somehow this transitioned into the mass-produced, fast food-out-of-a-box that is associated with Chinese food today. However the reality is that Chinese cooking is all about fresh ingredients – nothing canned, no bottled sauces, steaming and stir-frying with fresh oil. Steaming locks in fresh flavors, keeping it moist. In other words, if an ingredient (such as fish) is not fresh, steaming will >>

bring that out. On the other hand, frying hides anything that is not fresh. As such, steaming accentuates flavours of the ingredient, whereas frying covers them up.

I am a proponent of healthy eating and by doing what I love, I can share my expertise and help overcome commonly held stereotypes linking Chinese cuisine with fake flavours.

Chinese cuisine also has a negative image because of its use of MSG, which is known to be bad for health. What is your take on this?

MSG is a white crystalline extract of grains and vegetables widely used to tenderise and enhance the natural flavour of certain foods, particularly meat, in Japan and China, and in Western food processing. Some people have an adverse reaction to it, experiencing symptoms such as headaches, excessive thirst and palpitations. This allergic response is sometimes known as 'Chinese restaurant syndrome'. I believe that the freshest and finest ingredients need no enhancing and therefore, I never use MSG.

'Textures' are a new criteria of assessment introduced by Michelin star ratings in order to better review food. Can you please describe how this relates to Chinese cuisine?

Texture is indeed an integral element of the Chinese culinary landscape. Not only is our cuisine meant to be tasted and seen, it is just as much about how it feels in your mouth. Furthermore, there are certain meals that are intended to be experienced through the sense of sound. As you can see, there are dimensions of cooking that only the Chinese tradition has brought to the global stage. Ultimately, these are essential elements of our culinary history that make our food so well-rounded.

You're known the world over for your line of woks. How important is a wok for Chinese cooking?

It is absolutely imperative to use a wok when making my recipes. The wok is a perfect example of a working 'tool' within the Chinese culinary traditions. Not only is it a historical implement, but even from a scientific point of view, a wok retains heat extremely well. I designed the perfect wok back in 1986 and since then millions have been sold worldwide.

How would you describe your cooking style?

My cooking is all about fresh, healthy food with deep flavours.

What is the one ingredient that you could not live without?

Soy sauce is one ingredient that is a constant staple in my kitchen cabinet. That said, I am a firm believer in working with what you have and what's locally available to you.

Your work takes you around the world. How does all this travel influence your cooking?

Travel is important to me, as I want to explore what the world has to offer, dish by dish. We all have so much in common when it comes to raw ingredients, it's the seasonings and methods that differentiate each culture from another, and I hope to travel to many more places in the world for enriching cultural experiences that add depth to my life! Last year, I visited Spain, Holland, Germany, Australia, Brazil, USA, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, UK, Slovenia, Belgium, Singapore and the Czech Republic in 12 months. I'm sure many more countries will be coming on my path.

You are very active in your charity work with Action Against Hunger. Why is this cause important to you?

As a chef, I feel no one in the world should be hungry! Regardless of whether we are professional chefs at a restaurant, or amateur ones having fun at home, we all need to make a concerted effort to cut down wastage. Restaurant chefs in particular, have a responsibility to limit wastage. I even tell my chef friends to always take a look into their waste bin, as, even from a business efficiency perspective, it is money they have just thrown away.

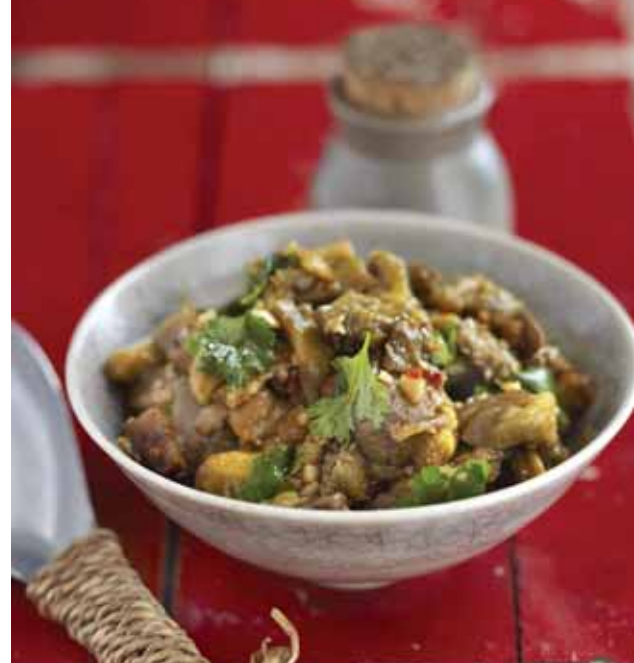
What are your thoughts on Dubai, would you ever think about a project here?

I would love to do something here in Dubai one day, since it is a city with so much culinary potential. This is my idea of paradise in that it is both simultaneously exotic and relaxing. I am always visiting Dubai for business, so I have yet to experience the relaxing side!

Finally, what is your biggest tip for aspiring chefs?

I think the most important thing is to love what you do and cook from your gut; the more you love to do it, the better the result will be. To be a good cook is not just about following a recipe, but more about the passion and love you invest into your food.

Faraw Sawaf is the founder of Dubai-based food website, [Cooking with a Manicure](http://Cookingwithamanicure.com). Visit cookingwithamanicure.com.



SIGNATURE RECIPE

Aubergine with sesame sauce

SERVES 4

675g Chinese aubergines or regular aubergines

FOR THE SAUCE

2 tbsp sesame paste or peanut butter
½ tsp roasted and ground Sichuan peppercorns (available in specialty stores, can be swapped for cracked black pepper)
2 tbsp sesame oil
2 tsp chilli oil
2 tsp sugar
1 tbsp garlic, finely chopped
2 tsp chilli bean sauce
2 tbsp fresh coriander, finely chopped
Salt, to taste

1 Preheat the oven to 200C/400F. Put the aubergines into a roasting tin, and bake them, for about 35 minutes if they are the Chinese variety, or 50 minutes if they are the larger variety. They should be charred outside and tender inside. Allow them to cool thoroughly and peel them. Set aside until you are ready to use them.

2 When you are ready to serve, mix all the sauce ingredients together, season with salt, add the cooked aubergines and mix well. Serve at once, at room temperature. 🍴

TIP This simple dish is delicious both as a starter or as a side. As a starter, it is served cold, and it may be made hours in advance; the sauce, however, should not be mixed with the cooked aubergines until you are ready to serve.



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Food Safari: Finland

Each month, we dip into the UAE's multicultural melting pot to discover a new cuisine from a foodie.



Johanna Iisakilla not only traded icy Finland for sunny Dubai in 2004, but also swapped a corporate career in IT and Telecom to set up her own travel business last year. Although she spent her childhood in Finland, the well-travelled executive has spent time studying and working in different countries around the world – from the US and Mexico to China – and travel is her second passion, after food; she has been blogging about food since 2006. “I’m passionate about food,” she says. “I love to eat, I love to cook, I love to explore supermarkets and food markets in different countries. I have made Finnish pancakes in Shanghai, steamed salmon dumplings in Manhattan, enjoyed quesadillas con pico de gallo in Mexico, prepared moose meat hunted by my father in Southern Finland and baked cinnamon rolls in San Diego!”

Her love of food stems from her grandmother with whom she spent a lot of time during her childhood. “My parents used to work, so I practically grew up

with my grandmother,” she explains. “She would cook two hot meals from scratch every single day, and bake several times a week. That was when my obsession with food started.” She then went to Finland’s only boarding school when she was 13, and as luck would have it, there was a focus on home economics there. “As part of our education, students had to prepare every meal from scratch – from that age, I’ve had the experience of cooking for 200 people!” she says. “I like to make food from scratch, to know what is inside.”

THE COUNTRY

While widely bracketed into the Scandinavian category along with neighbours Sweden and Norway, Finland is technically not part of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Culturally, however, it has a lot in common with Sweden, as well as its eastern neighbour Russia. “Finland is a meeting of east and west, so there are lots of Russian

flavours in our food,” says Johanna.

While the cuisine is more or less the same across the country, there are of course, minor regional variations, with the influences of the two big neighbouring countries clearly evident in the cuisine – western Finland is more Swedish-influenced, while eastern Finland is more shaped by the culinary traditions from Russia. For example, people in the west ate hard rye bread, while in eastern Finland, soft rye bread was more popular. Similarly, the buttermilk is more smooth in the west, but thicker and clotted in the east.

Europe’s northernmost country, Finland is surprisingly large – almost as big as Germany in size. However, most of the northern part lies above the Arctic circle, where the unforgiving temperatures and landscape make it largely unliveable. “Most people live in southern Finland,” says Johanna, who herself hails from Hämeenlinna, a small town near the capital.

With a landscape that is coastal to the south, bordering the Baltic Sea, Gulf of Finland, and Gulf of Bothnia, and Arctic in the north, Finland has been formed by thousands of years of continental glacial recession. Most of interior Finland is occupied by lakes, rivers and forests – which provide much of the produce used in Finnish cuisine. “My fondest childhood memories are associated with helping my grandmother in collecting and conserving lots of wild berries and mushrooms during the summer,” smiles Johanna.

The predominantly cold Nordic climate means that summers are quite short – usually running from July through to September – with snowy winters lasting from December to about March in the southern part of the country, and from October to almost May in the north. The long winters have led to the popularity of various methods of preserving food – including pickling, smoking, freezing and making jams – while summertime, with its long, light days, is when people make the most of fresh vegetables and fruit. “Nothing much grows here in wintertime, except maybe some tomatoes and cucumbers which aren’t very tasty, so summer is when we eat lots of salad and fresh vegetables,” Johanna says.

THE CUISINE

Finland’s culinary traditions are best defined as having fresh, clean, simple flavours with the purity of ingredients being paramount. As Johanna explains it, “being close to the nature can be tasted in our food.”

So that means very little use of spices, with salt, pepper and fresh herbs like dill and parsley being



Finland's snowy winters mean the diet includes lots of preserved foods



Johanna's love for food developed since she was little!

used for flavouring. The main proteins eaten include sweet-water fish (fished from the many lakes dotting the countryside), particularly salmon and herring, although different kinds of meat including beef and pork also play a big role in the cuisine, as does game, such as moose, reindeer and even bear. Game birds such as duck and grouse are also popular. "People love fishing and hunting," Johanna says.

Potatoes are also an essential component of most meals in Finland, usually eaten boiled and mashed. Boiling, steaming and baking are the most commonly used methods of cooking, and deep frying is rare. Equally popular is cereal, with different kinds of bread and porridge being very much a part of the dietary tradition, whether it's rye bread, or barley bread, or semolina porridge.

The other highlight of Finnish cuisine is berries – from the commonly known strawberries, blueberries and raspberries, to the quintessentially Scandinavian lingonberry, and other unfamiliar varieties such as cloudberry, bilberries and arctic brambleberries. Berries, which are seasonal, are used not just for cakes and pies, but also as relishes with meat, and to make jams and juices to use during the winter.

"Many people would grow some vegetables in their own garden, especially potatoes, carrots, onions, herbs. We'd also usually have at least one apple tree and usually strawberries, raspberries," says Johanna. "In recent years, it is becoming quite fashionable again to grow-your-own."

Another seasonal ingredient is wild mushrooms, which grows abundantly in the country's forests. Historically, people in eastern Finland ate all forms of edible mushrooms, including lesser known ones such as russula and milk-caps, while those in Western Finland preferred to eat rarer species like chanterelles, ceps and morels. Mushrooms are a classic example of Russia's influence on Finnish cuisine, as are the use of ingredients like pickled cucumbers and beetroots, which are eaten a lot

during the winter. Fermented dairy products such as cheese and buttermilk are also popular components of the cuisine.

While Finnish food may traditionally have acquired a bad rap in some circles for its blandness, modern innovations and influences, combined with the availability of a wide variety of fresh, seasonal produce, has led it to more than break free of that reputation, with multiple Michelin-starred restaurants in Helsinki earning the cuisine a well-deserved appreciation.

THE CULTURE

Johanna's international taste in food is probably a good reflection of the modern Finnish kitchen. "While traditional recipes include pies, roasts and porridges, in a modern Finnish kitchen, wraps, noodles and light fresh dishes are often prepared," she says.

The term 'Perinneruoka' which translates into traditional dish, is usually used to refer to specialties that are today, eaten only on special occasions, and are not to be confused with daily staples. 'Kotiruoka', which means homemade food, is what most people eat on a regular basis, with meatballs, pea soup and rye bread being typical examples.

Most people eat three main one-course meals, with breakfast being an important one – usually constituting of cereals, porridge or open sandwiches. Packing lunches is not a common



Johanna enjoys rustling up Finnish food for her friends

practice, as many people eat at work – there are very good subsidised canteens everywhere, Johanna explains – and dinner is eaten at around 5pm, typically a hot meal of soups or casseroles during winter, or fish with potatoes in the summer.

Like anywhere else, special occasions such as weddings, and festivals such as Christmas and Easter call for special food. "Christmas is our most important celebration, and every family has ham with traditional casseroles you only eat at Christmas-time," says Johanna. "Easter is the second biggest celebration, and we usually eat lamb then – this is only time when many Finns eat lamb, it is not a very popular dish otherwise."

May Day is also an important date in the calendar – however it is not a Labour Day party, but rather a spring festival, celebrated on the 1st of May. Johanna says, "Everybody has lunch together, usually picnic-style, with potato salad and sausages."

Johanna, who has always enjoyed entertaining friends with her cooking, remembers hosting May Day parties for her friends, where she cooked everything from scratch. She continues to share the "flavours from her Scandi-kitchen" with friends here in Dubai, and we got her to share some of her classic favourites. >>



Lindström's Steak Burgers

SERVES 4

2 beetroots, peeled and boiled
2 pickled beetroots
1 slice of white bread
200ml cream
500g minced beef
Salt
½ tsp white pepper
1 egg
30g can of capers, chopped into small pieces
A knob of butter
1-½ yellow onions
100ml cream
FOR THE PICKLED CUCUMBERS
2 cucumbers
¼ tsp sugar
¼ tsp salt
1 tsp white vinegar
2 tbsp fresh dill


1 Shred the peeled, boiled beetroots. Combine with white bread with the cream. Add both kinds of beetroots, spices, egg and minced meat together and mix well (it is a good idea to wear gloves while doing this). Let it rest for at least 30 mins (or even overnight if possible).
3 To make the pickled cucumbers, slice the cucumber with cheese slicer. Add sugar, salt, vinegar and chopped dill. Stir quickly. Let it rest in the fridge for a couple of hours.
4 Heat the butter in a frying pan and fry a small amount to check for seasoning. If it is fine, form burger patties with your hands and fry until they turn golden. Then place on a baking tray.
5 Slice the onions and fry in the remaining butter. Add the cream and mix together. Place them on top of the burgers and cook in the oven at 175C for 15mins.
6 Serve with the mashed potatoes and pickled cucumbers.



Poached Salmon with creamed lemon potatoes and gravy

SERVES 4

4x150g salmon fillet
Olive oil
½ a leek, chopped
1 garlic clove
½ a fennel
1 small celery stalk
100ml water
2 bay leaves
White pepper
2 tbsp fresh dill, chopped
Juice and peel of 1 lemon
FOR THE POTATOES
600g baby potatoes
25ml butter, melted
Juice and zest of ¼ lemon
100ml cream
2 tbsp fresh dill, chopped

1 Make the poaching liquid by lightly frying leek, garlic, fennel and celery for around 5 mins. Add water and half the lemon juice and the lemon zest, boil until it reduces to half. Add spices, and dill. Boil for around 15mins, flavour lightly with salt. Add rest of the lemon juice and let to rest for 30mins. Strain.
2 Boil the baby potatoes in the salted water. Combine the melted butter with peel and juice of ¼ lemon. Lightly toss the potatoes with the lemon butter. Keep warm.
3 Warm the poaching stock on a low heat and add the salmon fillet. Poach until salmon is tender but still red inside (be careful not to boil it). Take the fillets out and cover with foil. Keep warm.
4 Take 150ml of the poaching stock, and boil until it reduces to half. Add the cream and boil. Add the dill and check for seasoning.
5 To serve, take the skin off the salmon fillets, spoon some sauce over it and serve with the potatoes. 

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New



NEWSFLASH!

Dubai's favourite French restaurant, and former *BBC Good Food ME* awardswinner La Petite Maison has opened up in Beirut, at Le Vendôme Hotel. To book a table on your next visit to Lebanon, email info@LPMBeirut.com.

**Can we take your order, please?**

Forget stale salads and boring sandwiches – AirBaltic has just taken in-flight dining up a notch with their innovative new online meal ordering system launching this month. Passengers can now log on to the system and drag and drop items on to a virtual empty meal tray, choosing from over 20 options, to make up a meal containing exactly what they want to eat. Nutritional information on the food is offered as part of the service, and include options for gluten-free, lactose-free and vegetarian meals. We can't wait for something similar to launch with local airlines!

One for the road!

Hot on the heels of its Food Safari success, a handful of leading bars in London's popular foodie and nightlife district, Regent Street, have come together to offer the Regent Street Cocktail Safari. A new must-do in London, this bar crawl in the heart of the city takes you on a food and drink tour into leading outlets such as Mash, Bar Américain at Brasserie Zédel, Aqua, Gaucho, The Living Room, Le Meridien Piccadilly, Dirty Martini and Inamo, to sample signature cocktails and tapas-style food ranging from stuffed olives and charcuterie, to salt beef bagels, sliders, sushi and empanadas. From £3.95 (Dhs22) for small plates, visit regentstreetonline.com.



Travelling to Johannesburg? You won't have to worry about where to eat – popular restaurant listing website, Zomato, has launched a Jo'burg edition, which has over 2,000 restaurants, complete with menus, user reviews and coordinates listed. Free mobile apps also available, zomato.com.

TASTE OF THE world

All the foodie news from around the globe.

**Mykonos morsels**

If you're planning an island getaway this month, check in at the gorgeous San Giorgio, a 33-room beach house popular with celebrity DJs like Bob Sinclair and Snoop Dog. If the intimate luxury of the designer hotel wasn't reason enough to visit, their new community-style restaurant, Cantina, definitely will be – the Mediterranean-style dishes with a twist, created with fresh-from-the-market ingredients, offer the perfect complement to the trendy, pared-back chic of the hotel. Room rates start from € 150 per night (around Dhs710), visit www.designhotels.com/san_giorgio for more.

Just for the girls!

Hyatt hotels has rolled out a unique 'Women's Experience' initiative in all its hotels around the world, based on 18 months of research worldwide. The programme aims to tailor its services for female travellers, which includes offering healthy menu items such as fresh juices and smoothies, balanced portions, and 'create your own' options. Other aspects of the programme include offering amenities such as makeup remover wipes, curling irons and yoga mats on request, as well as high quality bathroom products.



M The magic of Morocco

The first *BBC Good Food ME Culinary Journeys* trip, in association with *The World At Her Feet*, offered a fascinating discovery of colours, aromas and flavours in picturesque Marrakech. By Sudeshna Ghosh.



PRE-TRIP MEET-UP

Our first Culinary Journeys trip to Morocco got off to a grand start in Dubai. The participants met up with the *BBC Good Food ME* and *World At Her Feet* teams at Marrakech restaurant in Shangri-La Hotel Dubai, a couple of weeks before departure, to get to know each other and get an introduction to the cuisine, over tasty canapés. The camaraderie in the group was evident from the get-go, with lots of laughter and excitement about

the trip, over Moroccan bites like Fig and pumpkin Maasal with goat cheese; Chicken pastille; Cinnamon lamb tagine with glazed dry prunes; Beef kofta stuffed with pine nut couscous; and Almond briwat.

The restaurant chef also joined the group towards the end, to give a short talk on the cuisine, while the rest of the time was spent planning for the trip. The ladies couldn't wait to head out!

setting for a formal dinner – to enjoy a lavish feast of salad, meatball and eggs tagine, and pastries. It was a taste of things to come, as there would be lots of eating over the next few days!

Breakfast the next morning was an alfresco affair at the poolside, where varieties of different breads, cakes and pastries, homemade jams and preserves, fresh eggs made to order – from the resident hens – and the sweetest freshly squeezed orange juice I've ever tasted, were all heaped on to the table. With the perfect weather, impossibly blue sky and a background soundtrack of twittering birds, daytime meals were enjoyed outdoors every day.

LESSONS IN FOOD

That morning, we commenced our first hands-on cooking class, which was headed up by Rafik, the villa manager, cooking instructor and de facto guide during our stay. A professional chef who has worked in Michelin starred restaurants in London, among other things, Rafik teaches his courses in a friendly, chatty manner, incorporating details about the Moorish culinary culture and the essential spices used in Moroccan cooking, busting myths about the traditional cuisine along the way – there's so much more to it than tagines and couscous! – while sharing useful cooking tips and tricks, all with a dose of humour. In that first cooking class, we were handed a small tagine each, with our names on it, which was to be our companion through the rest of our stay – almost at every meal, we were served massive portions of slow-cooked something or the other in our individual tagines!

The daily cooking classes were all fun and interactive, with lots of questions and food knowledge being bandied back and forth. For example, we learnt that the popular couscous salad is a modern western invention, and traditionally, Moroccans would never eat couscous in a salad form.

But salads are a popular part of Moroccan cuisine, with the abundance of fresh produce from around the region. In fact, at Dar Liqama, the concept of local produce is taken to a whole other level – they not only use herbs and >>

stunning entrance lobby which features traditional archways, an open atrium-style ceiling (with a retractable roof for rainy days and cold nights), another fountain gurgling in the centre, and hand-picked artefacts placed around the lounge area. Many genuine antiques have been restored and incorporated into the design, from the grand wooden entrance door, to the marble fountains, which gives the villa the feel of an authentic riad – with none of the space limitations that riads within the medina (the walled inner city) have.

The traditional theme carries through into the luxe bedrooms, each one of which is done up in a different style (some of them boast private fireplaces and terraces) with copper washbasins in the bathrooms; hand-painted tiles; and *tadlaqt* walls (a traditional technique of polished limestone finish). The *pièce de résistance* of the villa, however, is the sprawling first-floor terrace, which offers uninterrupted views of the palm trees and the Atlas mountains beyond, as well as the landscaped gardens, outdoor kitchen, and private pool.

It was here at the Las Terrasses des Berberes that we gathered for pre-dinner cocktails on our first evening, where the low seating and the warm glow of tealight candles created a magical atmosphere. For dinner, we proceeded to the grand dining room – which, true to its name, offered the perfect

The fact that I was travelling with a group of ardent foodies was evident right from the beginning. After touching down at Casablanca, as we embarked on the scenic two-hour drive to Marrakech, past lush green fields and small villages, the conversation naturally veered towards food, favourite restaurants, which is the best place for what cuisine, and so on. The enthusiasm was infectious and the anticipation high.

We arrived at Dar Liqama, our home for the next few days, in the late afternoon to a welcome of Moroccan tea, homemade cookies and warm smiles. Located on the outskirts of Marrakech, in the midst of a palm grove overlooked by the nearby Atlas mountains, Dar Liqama is part of a two-villa compound that feels like a remote getaway but is still only a short drive from the city centre – albeit on a bumpy off-road track.

Dar Liqama translates into 'House of green mint', and is a poetic description of this historic-style villa that is home to one of just three Rhode School of Cuisine cooking schools, a luxury gourmet vacation provider. Designed to resemble a traditional Moroccan riad – a house built around a central courtyard – the luxurious villa houses eight bedrooms (the adjacent Dar Louisa has five), as well as the cooking school kitchen. Landscaped gardens with a marble fountain lead into the



You're never too far from a tagine in Morocco!



Moroccan cuisine includes a wide variety of pastries



Mealtimes were a relaxed alfresco affair at Dar Liqama



The cooking classes kept us on our toes



We learnt to make different kinds of tagines



The formal dining room offers a grand setting



Luxurious accommodation is par for course at the villa



There's nothing like Moroccan tea made with fresh mint



The striking cobalt structures of Jardin Majorelle are picture-perfect

vegetables from the on-site garden, but also make their own olive oil (the freshness is evident from the distinct fragrance of olives coming through), use eggs hatched by their own chickens, and make their own honey! Whatever isn't made or grown in-house, the kitchen team goes shopping for, from the local markets each morning – cooking class participants are welcome to come along on these market visits.

Among other things, we cooked Harira soup (a traditional lentil soup), a variety of tagines – from lamb and chicken to lesser known ones such as artichoke tagine – chicken pastilla, almond cigars, couscous with vegetables, Briouate, Moroccan bread, as well as learnt to make our own preserved lemon and preserved butter. We also got to cook outdoors on coal-fired stoves in the traditional style, as well as observed cooking in a Tangia – a large urn-shaped clay pot in which seasoned meats are left to slow-cook overnight, or even over a couple of days, in the wooden stoves used in hammams. We tried our lamb tangia two days later, which had been cooking in the villa's own hammam, and were left ooh-ing and aah-ing over the flavour-infused meat that just fell off the bone, it was so tender.

Other highlights included learning to make couscous from scratch – a slow, labour-intensive process of steaming and rolling the grains by hand – and baking our own bread in the outdoor wood-fired oven. Some of the participants in our group were so enthusiastic to learn, they would come down early in the morning to help the lovely kitchen team prepare breakfast. All the hard work was rewarded with a certificate which was handed out to each participant at a formal 'graduation dinner' on the last evening.

JOURNEYS OF DISCOVERY

It wasn't just cooking all the time, however, as every day, after the classes, we headed out to explore the city and beyond. Marrakech is also known as the

'Red city', because of the terracotta-hued walls of the fortified medina, as well as most of the buildings – according to government rulings, no building in the city is permitted to be painted in any other colour, to maintain the uniformity; this is a quirk across Morocco, with different cities having different signature colours assigned to it.

There are plenty of other colours to assault the senses, however, at the D'jemaa el F'naa square, the throbbing heart of the city inside the ancient medina. A bustling, chaotic, exotic social gathering place, the sprawling square hasn't changed over the years, still playing host to a medley of snake charmers, acrobats, musicians, magicians, fortune-tellers and other entertainers. Labyrinthine alleys veer outwards from the main square, where you can bargain away to your heart's content for traditional handicrafts such as pottery, ceramics, rugs, jewellery, lamps, and brass work.

The square is overlooked by the towering Koutoubia mosque, Morocco's largest mosque, surrounded by beautifully landscaped gardens. Nearby are some of Marrakech's other important historical attractions, the Bahia palace, and the Saadian tombs. The Bahia palace, which dates back to the 19th century, is a great example of Moroccan craftsmanship, with stunning stuccos, intricate inlay work and zellige – a traditional technique where tiles painted in natural dyes are inlaid by hand to create geometrically-patterned mosaics. The Saadian tombs, morbid as they may sound, are another example of the country's rich design legacy with its intricate decorations of tiles and carvings – and come with an interesting story to boot. A 16th century burial ground for the Saad dynasty, it was later sealed when the tyrant ruler Moulay Ismail took over, only to be discovered as recently as 1917, by the French.

With our appetite for culture whetted, we headed back that evening to the villa terrace for a soiree with G'nawa music – a genre of African-

Islamic religious music and dance. The friendly entertainers – who are typically found performing in the D'jemaa el Fanaa square – sang in impassioned voices and danced with complete abandon, and seemed truly immersed in the music, sweeping us along on their beautiful, spiritual journey.

While it isn't hard to find beauty anywhere in Marrakech, one of the most picturesque spots in the city has to be the Jardin majorelle, a 12-acre botanical garden owned by Yves St Laurent, and a popular tourist attraction. Designed by French artist Jacques Majorelle, who can probably claim the garden as his ultimate masterpiece, the colourful Jardin Majorelle offers a stunning interplay of nature's beauty with human creativity. Home to a staggering variety of cacti (in a variety of sculptural shapes that look too quirky to be natural, but are!) and other lush foliage, the garden even has a colour named in its tribute – the Majorelle, a bright cobalt blue that the artist has used extensively in the garden, along with accents of bright yellow and orange in decorative urns placed around the garden. This is a wonderfully relaxing place to meander around in, and presents incomparable photo-ops.

Our excursions took us not only into the hurly burly of the city, but also into the lap of nature, up to the snow-capped Atlas mountains. A day-trip to the Berber village of Imlil, set at the foothills of Jebel Toubkal, the highest peak of the range, takes you past a rapidly changing landscape – desert terrain gives way to green mountainsides with babbling brooks gurgling downstream, alongside. We made a pit-stop at a local market on the way up – a busy hive of industrious activity where >>

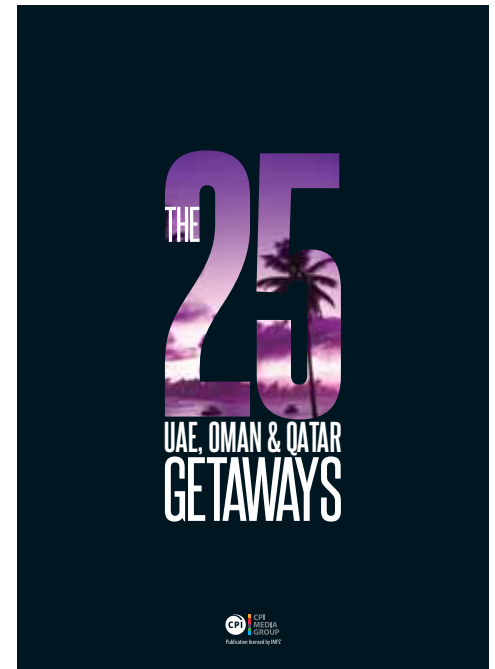
FOODIE SHOPPING IN MARRAKECH

You can't take a group of ladies on holiday, and not have shopping high on the agenda! If you want to spare yourself the stress of bargaining, head to the Bouchaib artisan complex in the Medina, where you will find everything you could buy outside in the markets, at fixed-price rates, and in air-conditioned comfort. Here are some of the can't-miss souvenirs we picked up:

- Tagines
- Ras-el-Hanout spice, an essential in Moroccan cooking
- Mini-tagines to serve dips and chutneys in
- Argan oil for cooking
- Moroccan tea sets

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Kasbah du Toubkal enjoys an enviable location



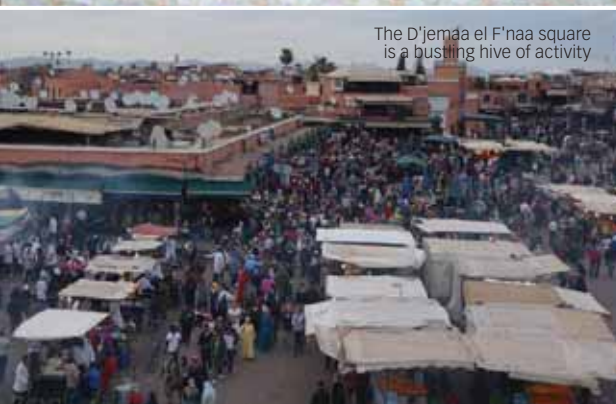
Unique cacti are aplenty at Jardin Majorelle



Argan oil being hand made at a village coop



Marrakech's markets dazzle the senses with colours and aromas



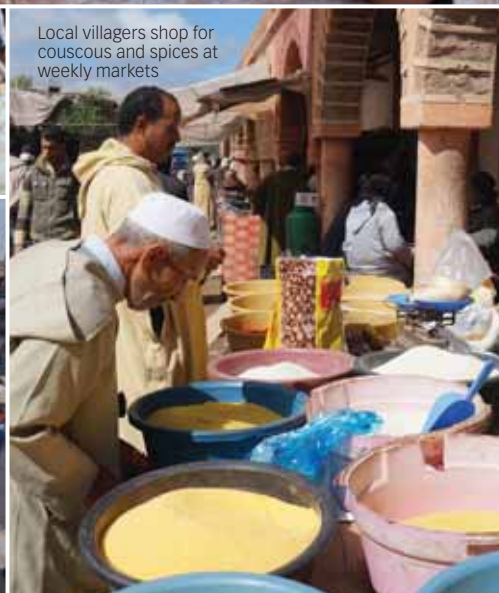
The D'jemaa el F'naa square is a bustling hive of activity



The hike to the Kasbah offers incomparable views




Traditional handicrafts include pottery and woven goods



Local villagers shop for couscous and spices at weekly markets

everything from second-hand Ralph Lauren slippers to fresh fruit is for sale, with the ubiquitous tagines bubbling away at food stalls. Taking the scenic route also allowed us to stop at an argan oil cooperative society in Tah'nout, where underprivileged local village women hand-produce argan oil from the seeds; you can get your fill of shopping for argan oil products here, whether it's cooking oils or beauty creams.

Once we got to Imlil, a tiny village that is popular as a starting point for trekkers, we disembarked to then take a gentle hike up to Kasbah du Toubkal – a picture-perfect hotel perched on a cliff-edge, with a terrace restaurant which reputedly offers the best views in North Africa. We were welcomed into the community-centric eco resort, which is built in a converted Kasbah (former home of local chieftain), in traditional fashion with rose water spray and dates dipped in milk. The restaurant, at 1,800 metres above sea-level, is a popular lunch spot for day-trippers like us – we tucked into a set menu of fresh salads, melt-in-the-mouth tagines, couscous, and fresh fruit washed down with Moroccan tea to finish, all served with a good helping of Berber hospitality.

While we came back from the trip with a recipe book and certificate from the culinary classes, souvenirs galore, and thousands of photographs, the memory of that warm fuzzy feeling you get from a combination of a stunning environment, fantastic food, friendly hospitality and good company, probably best sums up the overall experience for everyone involved. 

TRAVEL DIARY

GETTING THERE

Emirates offers daily direct flights to Casablanca from Dubai. To get the trip off to a luxurious start, book into business class where the nine-hour flight will feel a lot shorter as you kick back on the flat-bed seats, with an array of the latest movies to choose from, and gourmet cuisine – from tagine-style lamb to grilled fish – to feast on. Ticket prices start from Dhs3,495 on economy, Dhs11,575 for business class. emirates.com.

STAYING THERE

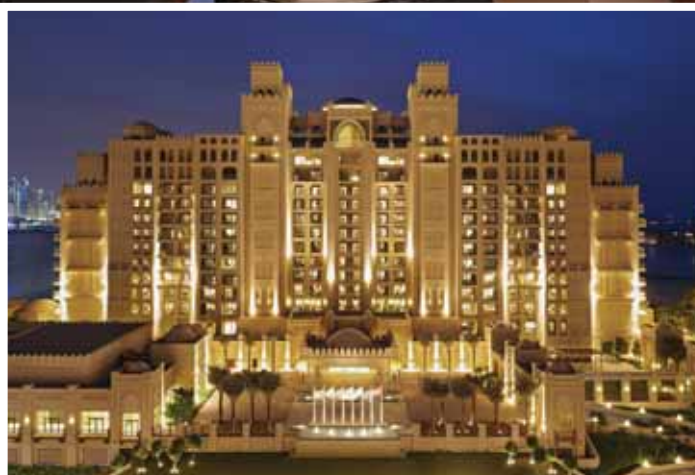
Room rates at Dar Liqama start from €2145 (Around Dhs10,200), all-inclusive, per person for a week. Email info@rhodeschoolofcuisine.com for details.

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Set on the iconic Palm Jumeirah, this beachside hotel boasts incomparable views of the Arabian Gulf and the glamorous Dubai Marina. The luxury hotel chain's second establishment in Dubai, this beach haven boasts a 450 metre private beach, four swimming pools, and cabanas – complete with a butler service.

One lucky winner can win a two-night weekend stay in a luxurious Fairmont View room, and wake up to a delicious breakfast at the Flow Kitchen, which serves European, Middle Eastern and Asian cuisine. Dinner at Seagrill on 25° Restaurant & Lounge, which offers fresh seafood and signature drinks, is also included in the package. To top off the weekend, they also get to enjoy an Arabic cooking class for two, with a professional chef.



Log on bbcgoodfoodme.com to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

At which restaurant does the hotel serve its breakfast buffet?

Scan this QR code
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*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of Corporate Publishing International and entrants below 21 years old are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.

Straight from the heart!

Canadian chef Thomas Pendarovski, executive chef at Sofitel Dubai Jumeirah Beach, has big plans for the different restaurants at the hotel. We asked him to share some of the details.



To start with, tell us a bit about yourself.

My father was an executive chef, and so it was kind of natural for me to get into the industry too – it's in my blood! I would help my father in his restaurant,

and started cooking things like soups and broths at home, since the age of eight. After graduating from the George Brown culinary school in Toronto, as one of the top two per cent of the class, I got a chance to go to Italy as part of their Viva Italia programme. I got to work at trattorias, travel across the country, learn about different pasta flavours, and understand the importance of cooking with produce grown in the region. After that, I worked in the US and Canada, before moving to St. Kitts in the Caribbean, where I managed ten restaurants. I've had the opportunity to do events like the G7 summit in England in 2005, and I even managed the 2007 Miami super bowl, which was a great experience. Before moving here, I was working at London's Royal Horse Guard Hotel.

What is your cooking philosophy?

I cook from the heart! My biggest inspiration were my parents, who taught me to cook with respect and understanding. It is important to use seasonal produce to bring out the flavours in dishes. When I joined the hotel, I created new cooking techniques and taught the chefs to use seasonal and sustainable produce. Leadership is not taught, and the same is with cooking. You need to learn how to be creative and cook from scratch, and you can only do this if you respect and understand the ingredients you cook with.

What changes have you made at the outlets?

I've revamped everything, from the menus to

the cooking techniques, introducing a different approach. I'm lucky to have a team who give me the freedom to do so. I joined a year after the hotel opened, and so my plan was to utilise the best quality ingredients and present the dishes in a simple yet elegant way, to let the food speak for itself.

What are some of the signature dishes at the restaurants that you would recommend?

At the moment white asparagus is our ingredient of the month, but other than dishes with this ingredient, I'd recommend the lobster or any other carpaccio at Rococo, as we do it in a unique manner; where instead of serving the carpaccio as slices, it is served as one big slice. At A.O.C French Brasserie, I would suggest the Steak frites; we use 40 days-aged US ribeye which is so tender, it can be cut with a spoon. Another great dish is the Scallops with beetroot, radish and truffle mango vinaigrette. At The Hub, it is definitely the Baby ribs and burgers, traditional Irish favourites.

What plans do you have for the future?

I'd love to have a herb garden at the hotel, but not sure how it will turn out, especially in the summer. Sofitel will be opening a new hotel, Sofitel Dubai the Palm, as well as one near the Burj in the near future, so it will be great to work with the chefs from these hotels too. Our restaurant menus change seasonally, but I'm looking forward to implementing a different kind of chef's tasting menu at Rococo later this year – guests can choose from a list of over 20 dishes, and select the number of courses they want, which can range anywhere from four to eight.

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Italian bites

At last month's Food Club event held at the recently opened Marina Home Interiors store at Dubai Mall, members gathered to watch Chef Fabio Genghini from Pax restaurant, Dusit Thani Dubai, demonstrate three Italian dishes, which they also got to sample. All guests walked away with goodie bags which included a 20 per cent discount card from Pax restaurant, and two gorgeous candle stands – perfect for a candlelight dinner! One lucky raffle draw winner also won a blender from The Sharper Image. Take a look at the pictures and recipes from the evening. Photographs ANAS CHERUR



Chef Fabio Genghini interacts with the audience



Chef Fabio shows guests how to prepare the tiramisu, step-by-step



Food Club members were all eyes and ears at the masterclass



A round of applause for the chef's hard work



Guests were eager to take photos of the culinary masterpieces.



Carol Owen from BBC Good Food ME introduces the chef



Dishes were sampled after each course was demonstrated



Delicious samplers were tried by all the attendees



The elegant store provided the perfect setting for the demo



Guests got their cooking queries answered by the chef



The lucky winner of the night!



STARTER

Bresaola and ricotta log on a rocket bed, parmesan cracker and balsamic dressing

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 mins • COOK 1 hour

300g fresh ricotta
A pinch of thyme
Two drops of lemon juice
Few drops of olive oil
20 slices of bresaola
20g parmesan cheese
50g rocket leaves
Balsamic vinegar

- 1** Using a spatula, fold the ricotta with thyme, lemon and oil. Season and refrigerate until ready to use.
- 2** Place the bresaola slices on a sheet of cling film, in a way that it forms a row or overlapping line.
- 3** Spoon the ricotta mixture onto the center of the bresaola slices and roll tight to create a log. Refrigerate for 1 hr
- 4** To make the parmesan cracker, place a bit of grated parmesan on a small piece of baking paper and cook for 1-2 minutes in a microwave. Drizzle the melted semi-liquid parmesan on a round pin or upside down cup – to get a tuile – and cool down.
- 5** Cut the bresaola log into slices, around 4-5cm thick.
- 6** To serve, place the rocket salad leaves on a plate and a bresaola slice on top. Serve with the parmesan cracker and a drizzle of balsamic vinegar. >>



The event took place at the all-new Marina Home Interiors store in Dubai Mall



Marinated tuna and prawns salad with melon, avocado and rocket

SERVES 4 • PREP 15-20 mins • NO COOK

16 medium sized prawns
2 oranges
Few sprigs of parsley
6 lemons
500g fresh tuna
1 red chilli, chopped
2 avocados
Few basil leaves
2 cloves of garlic, peeled and core removed
100ml olive oil
200g roman lettuce
100g rocket leaves
200g cherry tomatoes
½ cantaloupe

1 Poach the prawns and bind them from the head side, so that you make an S shape, by tucking one into the other.

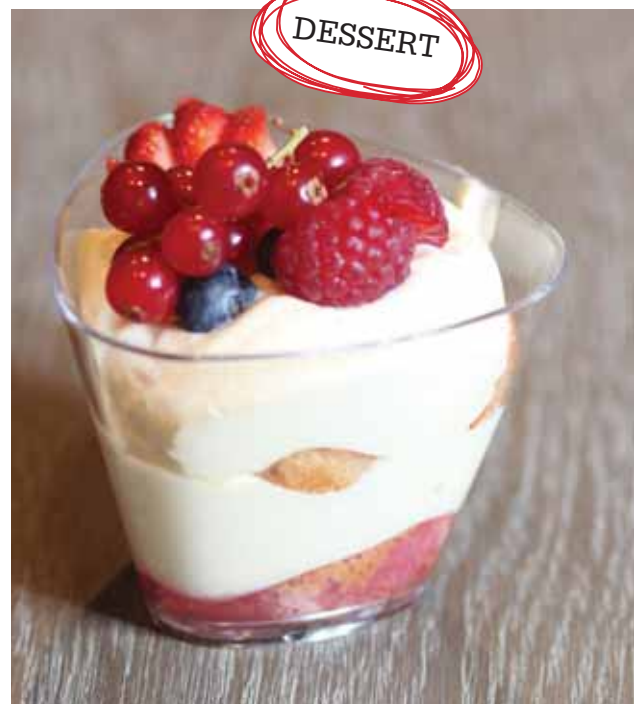
2 Juice all the lemons, and keep aside the juice of 1 lemon. Grate the zest of ½ a lemon and mix in some chopped parsley.
3 Take a piece of fresh tuna and add to the lemon juice mixture. Set aside to marinate for 15-20 mins.
4 Meanwhile, mash the avocado and add in half of the remaining lemon juice, chilli and pinch of chopped parsley. Mix together to form a cream, season and set aside.
5 Make the lemon basil dressing by blending a little zest, the rest of the lemon juice, basil, garlic and the olive oil. Dress the lettuce and rocket leaves with the lemon basil dressing.
6 Thinly slice the cantaloupe using a really sharp knife.
7 To serve, place the salad, add a slice of orange and a prawn on top. Then place the tuna slices on both sides and a scoop of the avocado cream on top of each slice. Serve with sliced cherry tomatoes and cantaloupe.

Berry tiramisu

MAKES 6 • PREP 15 mins • No cook

500g mascarpone
5 eggs
5 tbsp sugar
30cmX30 cm Vanilla sponge biscuits (available at all supermarkets)
300g cream
2 cups juice of mixed berries
Mixed berries, such as blueberries, cranberries, raspberries, for garnish

1 Whisk the egg white with half the sugar, until firm, and refrigerate for 10 mins.
2 On high speed, whisk the egg yolks with the rest of the sugar, and once foamy, add the mascarpone cheese.
3 Reduce the speed of the mixer and slowly whisk the cream until everything is combined.
4 Soak the biscuits in the juice and make a layer on a shallow tray. Spread a layer of mascarpone mix on top, and repeat the process to make two layers.
5 Add mixed berries on top of each portion when serving. **GF**



Home furnishing store Marina Home Interiors was established in Dubai in 1998, and has since expanded to Bahrain and Delhi. The brand offers a collection of furniture and accessories that range from luxurious or modern, to rustic or exotic. Check out their newly opened store in Dubai Mall to find plush sofas, beds, dining tables and home accessories, among other things. Call 04-3882012 or visit marinagulf.com for more information.



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All the inspiration you need for a delicious summer holiday!

- Gourmet getaways around the globe
- Foodie paradise London
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* Hydrating drinks for hot summer days



* A tête-à-tête with TV chef Bobby Chinn



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What they said

Feedback from our Food Club members:

● *Thank you for inviting me to the Masterclass. It's my first time attending a Food Club event and I love that we get a chance to sample these delicious dishes.* ● – Ann Jones

● *The chef prepares everything so clearly in front of you, which makes it easy to cook at home. I'm really enjoying myself and look forward to attending other Food Club events.* ● – Faryal Riza

● *The class is presented in such a great way! All these dishes look really easy to replicate at home, and even though I hardly cook, I will definitely try these.* ● – Mitali Khanwani

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This Bur Dubai hotel is known for its popular restaurants Titanic by Marco Pierre White, and Signature by Sanjeev Kapoor.

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www.ritzcarlton.com



MEDIA ONE HOTEL

This modern hotel in Dubai Media City offers contemporary dining outlets including Café M, Z:One and The Deck on 8.

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www.mediaonehotel.com



MOVENPICK BUR DUBAI

Located in central Dubai, the hotel's outlets include authentic North Indian restaurant Chutneys, and Fountain.

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www.moevenpick-hotels.com



AL RAHA BEACH HOTEL

Set on the corniche, the hotel's outlets are Sevilla, Azur, Café Mozart, Black Pearl Bazar, Enigma, Wanasah and Al Manzil.

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SANDS HOTEL

This Abu Dhabi hotel's restaurants include LaPiazza, Harvesters Pub, Chequers, Tipar Bar and Cappuccino Royal Café.

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Competitions

Fabulous prizes, from dining vouchers to event passes, up for grabs.

WIN! GIRLS NIGHT OUT FOR FOUR, WORTH OVER DHS3,000, AT YAS VICEROY ABU DHABI

Gather three girlfriends and visit the stunning Yas Viceroy hotel, to be treated to a gourmet three-course dinner at Amici restaurant. Then, head to Skylite bar to try a cocktail class, where you can learn to make your favourite cocktails, and indulge in a bottle of bubbly. You don't have to worry about getting home, as the package includes a luxury chauffeur service!



WIN! BRUNCH FOR TWO, WORTH OVER DHS900, AT SHANGRI-LA HOTEL DUBAI

Two people can get a chance to indulge at this hearty brunch that combines two restaurants, Marrakech and Amwaj, every Friday. The lavish buffet features fresh seafood such as Alaskan crab legs, sushi, sashimi, a family-style seafood pot, as well as authentic Moroccan favourites such as lamb mechoui. A live couscous station is also available, as are signature cocktails.

WIN! BRUNCH FOR TWO, WORTH DHS 750, AT BICE, HILTON DUBAI JUMEIRAH RESORT

One lucky winner and a friend can sate their appetites with a four-course à la carte brunch which offers the best of Italian classics such as insalata caprese, calamari fritti, carpaccio alla veneziana, homemade pastas, rock salted sea bass, fresh seafood and decadent desserts. Complement your dishes with refreshing cocktails, wine and hops.



DOHA competitions

DINNER FOR TWO AT BENTLEY'S GRILL, WORTH OVER QR500, AT RADISSON BLU HOTEL, DOHA

One winner and a partner can enjoy a memorable steakhouse experience by tucking into some of the finest seared Wagyu beef at Bentley's Grill. Relish every bite as you sit by the crackling fire place at this elegant restaurant, which is reminiscent of a private gentlemen's club.



MEAL FOR TWO AT BLUE RESTAURANT, GRAND HERITAGE DOHA HOTEL AND SPA, WORTH QR 500

Treat a friend to a delicious meal of tender steak and mouth-watering sushi, and enjoy a casual dining experience, as you sit out at the lounge terrace and take in the views of the scenic Aspire park.



WIN! BRUNCH FOR TWO, WORTH DHS550, AT MAZINA, THE ADDRESS DUBAI MARINA

One winner and a friend can head to the family brunch, to savour a selection of cuisines, from Asian to European. There's everything from fresh seafood to wok-fried noodles on offer, as well as a range of curries and roasts. Show kitchens make for an interactive dining experience, while the Marina views add atmosphere. A good-value way to spend a weekend!

WIN! DINNER FOR TWO AT THE HUB IRISH BAR AND RESTAURANT, SOFITEL DUBAI JUMEIRAH BEACH, WORTH DHS400

Take a friend along to this relaxed, casual bar and restaurant that serves traditional Irish foods such as baby ribs, burgers and shepherd's pie, in a complete Irish setting. The Hub Irish bar is the ideal spot for after-work drinks and delicious comfort food.



WIN! DINNER FOR TWO AT CHANNELS, MEDIA ROTANA HOTEL, WORTH OVER DHS400

Take a friend to the Oishii sushi theme-night which takes place every Monday, and tuck into your favourite sushi and sashimi delights from a widespread buffet. Those who want to try something different can try the Mongolian cuisine live cooking station to enjoy a selection of authentic dishes.

To stand a chance to win these prizes, visit our competitions page on www.bbcgoodfoodme.com, or simply scan this QR code with your mobile to go directly to the website, and answer the simple questions.

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36-year old **IRINI SAVVA** is a wife, mother of a nine-month old baby, and founder of the food blog IriniSavva.com. The South African-Cypriot blogger moved to Dubai from Cyprus, over three years ago, and is constantly cooking and writing, when her hands aren't full with the baby. Irini enjoys practicing yoga, and when she has time to spare, she loves experimenting and creating recipes – which she hopes to publish in a book someday.

Food luxury:

I can't live without Ecuadorian raw organic chocolate.

What I know about food today...

My mother used to cook Greek Cypriot dishes such as Flaounes (Cheese pastries made for Easter) and homemade halloumi cheese, from scratch. I never thought about the time and preparation that went into one dish, as a child, but now that I am older and cook myself, I'm much more appreciative.

Meet the blogger

Helping you connect to the UAE'S foodie community, one blog post at a time.

*About the blog

IriniSavva.com is a way of expressing my interest and passion for food and everything I love. The blog was launched in 2011, and includes customised recipes, as well as snippets of expat life here in Dubai, and ways in which I adapt every day, healthy recipes to suit the local climate and environment.

I like to cook with seasonal produce, and make sure my dishes always have fruit or vegetables.



My ultimate healthy sweet treat
My French chocolate-beetroot cake, and summer peach cake.

A foodie personality I would love to dine with...

Nigel Slater – he would have lots of interesting stories to tell. I would cook my signature dish, a Greek-style slow roasted lamb, as I believe it's always important to represent who you are, and where you come from, in your food.

My favourite movie food scene

In *The Lady and the Tramp*, when they share a plate of spaghetti and meatballs and accidentally get the same piece of spaghetti. I saw the movies in the 80s – it's a classic!

Favourite restaurant

I love the food, and sharing concept at Le Petit Maison, and would definitely go back just for the potato gratin.

Midday snack fix

With a young baby on my hands, I usually have whatever he's having, like fresh fruit or yoghurt.

A meal I'd prepare in ten minutes!

I would most likely make my Cauliflower and kale salad, fried calamari rings, or a blueberry smoothie – nutritious and great as a snack on-the-go.



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